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## **Convention to Combat Desertification**

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### **Conference of the Parties**

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Item 7 (b) of the provisional agenda

#### **Programme and budget**

#### **Financial performance for the Convention trust funds**

### **Report on the implementation of the costed two-year work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology (2010–2011)**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

##### *Summary*

This document contains information on the implementation of the costed two-year work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology for the first seventeen months of the biennium 2010–2011. It should be read in conjunction with the documents on the performance reports of the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (see ICCD/COP(10)/10, ICCD/COP(10)/12, ICCD/COP(10)/13 and ICCD/COP(10)/15).

## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction .....	1–2	3
II. Report on the performance of the Committee on Science and Technology .....	3–17	3
A. Overview of expenditure .....	8–9	4
B. Main accomplishments in 2010–2011 .....	10–14	5
C. Performance by expected accomplishment .....	15–17	5
III. Conclusions and recommendations .....	18	9

## I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) in decision 3/COP.8, the secretariat, the Global Mechanism (GM), the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) plan, carry out and monitor progress in their work by using four-year workplans and costed two-year work programmes. These workplans and work programmes follow a results-based management (RBM) approach, and their content has been approved by the COP. The above-mentioned Convention institutions and bodies each submit to the COP for its consideration a report on their performance in delivering the workplans at the end of each biennium, building on the United Nations Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation<sup>1</sup> and following RBM approach. This document is one such report on the performance of the CST.

2. Given the close interlinkages between the workplan and work programme of the CST and those of the secretariat, the CRIC and the GM, the present document should be read in conjunction with the performance reports of the other Convention institutions and bodies.<sup>2</sup>

## II. Report on the performance of the Committee on Science and Technology

3. In The Strategy, the CST is given primary responsibility to fulfil operational objective 3 that envisages the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to “become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought”.

4. To this end, The Strategy calls for a number of outcomes to be generated in the course of the next ten years:

**Outcome 3.1:** National monitoring and vulnerability assessment on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected countries are supported.

**Outcome 3.2:** A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized.

**Outcome 3.3:** Knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors and on their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making.

**Outcome 3.4:** Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved to develop tools to assist decision-making.

**Outcome 3.5:** Effective knowledge-sharing systems, including traditional knowledge,<sup>3</sup> are in place at the global, regional, subregional and national levels to

<sup>1</sup> ST/SGB/2000/8.

<sup>2</sup> Documents ICCD/COP(10)/10, ICCD/COP(10)/12, ICCD/COP(10)/13 and ICCD/COP(10)/15.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding traditional knowledge on genetic resources.

support policymakers and end users, including through the identification and sharing of best practices and success stories.

**Outcome 3.6:** Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought are engaged to support UNCCD implementation.

5. According to The Strategy, in order to fulfil its mandate, the CST shall be strengthened to assess, advise and support implementation, on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis, of the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the causes and impacts of desertification/land degradation. The CST shall inform COP decisions.

6. As CST work programme priorities, The Strategy lists the following:

(a) The CST develops, in cooperation with relevant institutions, tools and methods, biophysical and socio-economic baselines on desertification/land degradation at the national level.

(b) The CST develops, in cooperation with relevant institutions, methodologies and guidelines for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation trends.

7. In line with decision 3/COP.8, the plan for the CST to deliver its functions was recorded in its 2010–2014 workplan and 2010–2011 work programme that were prepared according to the RBM approach, and structured to follow the above-mentioned outcomes of operational objective 3 of The Strategy. The analysis of progress in implementing the workplan provides the basis for this performance report.

## A. Overview of expenditure

8. The workplan and work programme of the CST are closely linked with the workplan and work programme of the Convention secretariat. All substantive support with financial implications is covered in the secretariat's work programme. Consequently, during the biennium 2010–2011, the budget of the CST contained only the costs of the CST Bureau meetings, which were under the core budget of the Convention, and the costs of participation in the CST sessions. The table below provides an overview of core budget expenditure as at 31 May 2011.

Table

### Expenditure for the budget of the Committee on Science and Technology by object of expenditure

(Euros)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Approved budget 2010–2011</i>	<i>Expenditure as at 31 May 2011</i>	<i>Expenditure as a percentage of the budget</i>
Travel for 20 participants	64 800	43 214	66.7
Logistical arrangements	7 200	2 801	38.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>72 000</b>	<b>46 015</b>	<b>63.9</b>

9. It is anticipated that the budget of the CST will be fully utilized by the end of the year.

## B. Main accomplishments in 2010–2011

10. The second special session of the CST was held in February 2011, and its tenth regular session will take place in October 2011. The CST Bureau worked intensively during the biennium 2010–2011, both between and during the CST sessions.

11. The focus of the CST was on developing tools for the initial monitoring of impact, which will be done through reviewing progress in meeting the strategic objectives 1–3 of The Strategy. As a starting point, the COP, at its ninth session in 2009 and at the recommendation of the CST, provisionally approved 11 impact indicators subject to further refinement, two of which constitute the minimum required for reporting by affected countries beginning in 2012. The refinement continued in 2010–2011 through an iterative process including scientific peer reviews and the launching of country-level pilot tracking exercises. The impact indicators will be taken into use in the 2012 reporting and review process.

12. Another major topic before the CST was the scientific conferences, i.e. the follow-up to the UNCCD 1st scientific conference that took place in 2009 and the preparation of the second such conference that will be held in 2012.

13. The CST Bureau led the preparatory work for considerations on how to provide international and interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD process, and it also guided the work of the secretariat in developing its knowledge management, with particular attention to advancing the systematic brokering of scientific knowledge under the Convention.

14. Looking at the results of the work of the CST thus far and the actions planned up until the end of 2011, it may be summarized that the CST has succeeded in initiating the move of the Convention process into to a new context whereby decision-making under the Convention will be increasingly based on factual information on the status of desertification/land degradation at national level, and on an organized supply of scientific information and knowledge. Having concluded the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference and using the lessons learnt for the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, the CST has also successfully launched a new operational modality for scientific cooperation in the Convention process, which is likely to draw increasing participation and inputs of the scientific community and result in solid, science-based feedback and guidance on selected priority themes concerning the Convention.

## C. Performance by expected accomplishment

15. The 2010–2013 workplan of the CST contains eight expected accomplishments, which represent the results that it has set to be achieved in four years of time. Half of these expected accomplishments address the development of impact indicators and related baselines; one of them deals with the priority themes that are the focus of the scientific conferences; two concern interactions between desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) and climate change or biodiversity conservation; and one involves considerations on engaging scientific networks and institutions in the UNCCD process.

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**Outcome area 3.1: National monitoring and vulnerability assessment on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected countries are supported**


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**Outcome area 3.2: A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized.**


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<b>Expected accomplishments (2010–2013)</b>	<b>Performance indicators (2010–2013)</b>	<b>Performance data, including main outputs</b>
Parties use a consolidated set of impact indicators.	Progress in meeting strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 is measured according to a consolidated set of impact indicators.	<u>Status as at 31 May 2011:</u> The CST has continued working on the impact indicators, harmonized methods, baselines and reporting tools, and the issue of capacity-building. It will submit recommendations to the COP at its tenth session on these issues, with a view to facilitating the reporting against the impact indicators in 2012.
Parties use gradually harmonized methods to measure progress against the consolidated set of impact indicators.	Increase in the number of country Parties using harmonized methods	At the second special session of the CST, it was recommended that work on the methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 build on the outcomes of the scientific peer review, and it was requested that the secretariat continue its work in this area. It was further recommended that the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, produce reporting templates and guidelines for reporting, and further refine the glossary of terms and definitions for the effective use of the impact indicators.
Parties agree measures to address capacity-building needs relating to the use of impact indicators and the establishment of targets and baselines.	A COP decision on an enhanced capacity-building programme relating to the use of impact indicators	
Parties establish national and regional baselines and targets for the consolidated set of indicators by using commonly agreed criteria.	A comparative review of progress in meeting strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 is carried out.	<p>The recommendations made at the second special session of the CST also included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The preparation of a capacity needs assessment relating to existing monitoring of the information covered under the impact indicators should be considered;</li> <li>- The integration of periodic scientific peer reviews into the Convention process should be considered;</li> <li>- The Global Environment Facility, through its Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, should be further involved in the refinement of the impact indicators; and</li> <li>- The secretariat should develop a proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group of technical experts and of an institutional partners group to further work on the impact indicator refinement process.</li> </ul> <p>After the second special session of the CST (CST S-2), the Bureau of the CST continued guiding the refinement of the impact indicators, including the organization of a global e-forum and launching of country level pilot tracking exercises. The Bureau also worked on modalities for analysing the scientific and technical information that will be contained in the 2012 reports, and considered the possible use of the related scientific outcomes. These matters will be further discussed at CST 10.</p>

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**Outcome area 3.3: Knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors and on their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making.**


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Expected accomplishments (2010–2013)	Performance indicators (2010–2013)	Performance data, including main outputs
Parties address priority themes that have been selected by the CST as key emerging issues.	CST recommendations on priority themes are reflected in COP decisions.	<p><u>Status as at 31 May 2011:</u> The CST priority themes are considered at the UNCCD Scientific Conferences. , and the preparations for the UNCCD2nd Scientific Conference are well underway. As per COP decision, this conference will be organized well in advance of the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11) so that the outcomes of the conference can be duly processed for prompt submission to the COP, which will facilitate their reflection in COP decisions.</p> <p>At CST S-2, the organization and the outcomes of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference were reviewed by the Committee, and following recommendations related to the scientific conferences were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The lessons learnt from the organization of the UNCCD1st Scientific Conference should be used in the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference;</li> <li>- A conference steering committee to coordinate the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, and an independent scientific advisory committee composed of scientists representing the different regions and led by the selected lead institution, should be established;</li> <li>- - The secretariat should seek the assistance of the lead institution to secure adequate funding both for the costs of organizing the scientific conference and for the attendance of scientists from developing and eligible countries; and</li> <li>- The regions should mobilize experts through the CST Bureau to contribute to the substantive preparatory process focusing on the theme of the conference.</li> </ul>

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**Outcome area 3.4: Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved to develop tools to assist decision-making.**


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<b>Expected accomplishments (2010–2013)</b>	<b>Performance indicators (2010–2013)</b>	<b>Performance data, including main outputs</b>
<p>Scientific cooperation and knowledge exchange with the scientific subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are increased.</p> <p>Parties identify relevant subjects related to the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and the restoration of degraded lands.</p>	<p>Agreement among the three conventions on enhanced scientific cooperation and knowledge exchange</p> <p>A COP decision on relevant subjects to be addressed jointly by the three conventions</p>	<p><u>Status as at 31 May 2011:</u> The secretariat will submit an information document to CST 10 on cooperation with relevant scientific bodies.</p> <p>The CST did not fully address the cooperation with the scientific subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC and the CBD, nor the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and the restoration of degraded lands.</p> <p>However, related matters were discussed at the CST Bureau meeting, and the Chair of the Bureau participated in some meetings of the CBD.</p> <p>Furthermore, the secretariat explored possible modalities for cooperation or information exchange between the scientific subsidiary bodies and the issue was also brought up at the April 2011 meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio Conventions.</p>

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**Outcome area 3.6: Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought are engaged to support UNCCD implementation.**


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<b>Expected accomplishments (2010–2013)</b>	<b>Performance indicators (2010–2013)</b>	<b>Performance data, including main outputs</b>
<p>Parties agree on effective ways to engage scientific networks and institutions in the UNCCD process and related measures.</p>	<p>A COP decision on effective ways to engage scientific networks and institutions in the UNCCD process and related measures.</p>	<p><u>Status as at 31 May 2011:</u> At CST S-2, recommendations were made concerning actions on engaging scientific networks and institutions in the UNCCD process, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On organizing international interdisciplinary scientific advice to the Convention, the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, was requested to organize a global e-survey to discuss and further identify possible scenarios and assessment criteria, and ensure participation in the assessment through regionally based facilitation. This e-survey was open in July–August 2011 and its outcomes will be presented at COP 10; and</li> <li>- On the role of science and technology correspondents (STCs), a related survey was organized and its outcomes will be presented at COP 10. Parties were requested to regularly update the list of STCs and the roster of experts.</li> </ul>

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16. In addition to its delivery of the workplan presented above, the CST, through its second special session and Bureau meetings, actively guided the secretariat in developing a knowledge management system and its scientific knowledge brokering component. In this context, it was recommended at CST S-2 that the roles and responsibilities of the CRIC and the CST in the compilation and review process on best practices be clarified. It was recommended that the secretariat, while developing the knowledge management system, seek to complement existing knowledge management systems and similar initiatives, engage in partnership-building and, taking into consideration the technology and capacity limitations that end-users may have, make the knowledge management system as simple as possible with the aim of facilitating its broad accessibility and usability.

17. During the biennium, the CST Bureau held regular meetings in March, June, and November 2010 and in February and May 2011. In addition, daily CST Bureau meetings were held during CST S-2 to facilitate the work during the session.

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

**18. The COP may wish to take note of this report and provide guidance, upon recommendation by the CST, on the strategic orientation of the 2012–2015 workplan of the CST.**

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