



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO Regional Dialogue on Land Degradation Neutrality in Europe and Central Asia

20-21 October 2021
Online

BACKGROUND

Human beings depend on the land for sustenance and livelihoods, and with a mixture of water, soil and biodiversity land provides valuable ecosystem services (e.g. food, water and energy) to people for sustainable livelihoods around the world. However, land degradation has impacted the health and livelihoods of an estimated 3.2 billion people and therefore the related cost is estimated at about US\$490 billion each year, which is higher than the cost of action to prevent it.¹ To tackle this global environmental challenge, the global community has committed to working towards land degradation neutrality (LDN).

The concept of LDN first emerged from the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012.² And the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) defines it as “a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem function and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”.³ To avoid or reduce land degradation, with respect to Sustainable Development Goal 15 - ‘Life on Land’ and its target 15.3,⁴ the LDN concept is crucial in encouraging a broad range of measures such as planning, regulation, and sustainable land management (SLM) practices, which need to be integrated into national frameworks.

Of those member countries in the region set voluntary LDN targets, many neither have a mechanism for monitoring the implementation and achievement towards LDN nor accurate local data on national relevant LDN indicators. In addition, a lack of regulatory and institutional framework has deteriorated land degradation without proper land management. To address these challenges, for instance, FAO has partnered with GEF, a financial mechanism for UNCCD to halt and reverse land degradation. The implementation of projects supports mainstreaming LDN into National Action Programmes (NAPs) aligned with UNCCD’s Strategic Plan, helping member countries to achieve their voluntary LDN targets and recover from DLDD (Desertification, land degradation and drought) and other land-related issues.

¹ <https://www.thegef.org/topics/land-degradation-neutrality>

² Ibid.

³ Cowie, A. et al. 2018. Land in balance: The scientific conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality, as cited in GEF-8 Programming Directions. 2021

⁴ “combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world” by 2030.



There are currently 15 LDN-related GEF projects⁵ covering 13 member countries in the region, which are worth more than US\$47 million in total.

Against this background, the workshop aims to raise awareness of the up-to-date LDN situation in the region and discuss with relevant stakeholders current LDN-related issues to identify challenges and opportunities for the upcoming GEF-8 replenishment cycle (2022–2026) and other relevant funds which could be streamed into relevant projects. Moreover, it aims to facilitate consultation and to reinforce the technical capacities of participants by providing online tools to support the LDN debate on indicators, implementation strategies and monitoring mechanisms.

OBJECTIVE

- Raise awareness on LDN in the region
- Discuss ways to intensify the action on LDN in the region
- Present and discuss a Decision support system (DSS) for the region
- Increase technical capacity on LDN among FAO CO and governmental staff
- Provide guidance on the DSS for the region

LANGUAGE

The workshop will be held in English. Simultaneous interpretation will be available in Russian and Turkish.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- UNCCD focal points
- Directors from the ministries responsible for LDN
- Technical staff from ministries of agriculture and environment involved in LDN
- Technical staff involved with the implementation of LDN projects
- Academia and researchers involved with LDN
- CSOs and Civil society organizations

METHODOLOGY AND PROGRAMME

The workshop will be organized online and will be split into 2 days. The first day will be a high-level discussion focusing on the political commitments on LDN for the region and the second day will focus on the technical aspects of LDN and the next steps to strengthen the regional process and share knowledge among countries and stakeholders.

⁵ Which includes both active and under preparation projects from GEF-5 to GEF-7



AGENDA

20 October <i>High-level discussion on political commitment on LDN for the region</i>	
Moderator: Sara Marjani Zadeh	
11:00-11:10	<i>Opening remarks</i> Raimund Jehle , Regional Programme Leader, FAO REU
11:10-11:20	<i>LDN in FAO</i> Vera Boerger , Senior Land and Water Officer, FAO
11:20-11:30	<i>Overview of LDN in the region</i> Carolina Rizzi Starr , Agricultural Officer, FAO REU
11:30-11:40	<i>LDN in the UNCCD processes</i> Jamal Annagylyjova , Regional Liaison Officer, UNCCD
11:40-11:55	<i>LDN process in Ukraine</i> Eduard Arustamyan , UNCCD focal point, Ukraine
11:55-12:10	<i>LDN process in Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> Svetlana Lazic , Senior Associate for Agricultural Land Protection, BiH
12:10-12:25	<i>LDN process in Uzbekistan</i> Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev , UNCCD focal point, Uzbekistan
12:25-12:35	<i>Socioeconomic implications during LDN process</i> Pablo Muñoz , Programme Officer, UNCCD
12:35-12:45	<i>Guidance on integrating VGGT into the LDN framework</i> Aurelie Bres , Land and Water Officer, FAO
12:45-13:00	<i>LDN and GEF in the region</i> Hernan Gonzalez , Technical Officer, FAO OCB



21 October

Technical aspects of LDN and next steps to strengthen the regional process and share knowledge among countries and stakeholders

Moderator: Carolina Rizzi Starr

11:00-11:10	<i>Wrap up from the first day</i> Carolina Rizzi Starr , FAO REU
11:10-11:25	<i>Biophysical indicators for LDN</i> Ingrid Teich , Land Degradation Neutrality Specialist, FAOSEC
11:25-11:40	<i>Socioeconomic indicators for LDN</i> Bradley Paterson , International Land Tenure Specialist, FAO REU
11:40-12:00	<i>The regional app</i> Ingrid Teich , Land Degradation Neutrality Specialist, FAOSEC / Cesar Luis Garcia , LDN expert
12:00-12:15	<i>The Turkey case</i> Sibel Tekin , National Project Coordinator, FAOSEC Suna Morkoç , General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Turkey
12:15-12:45	<i>Using the app – working group activity</i>
12:45-13:00	<i>Discussion on the Overview of LDN in the Region - working group activity</i>
13:00-13:10	<i>Plenary section and feedback on the app</i> Ingrid Teich and Cesar Luis Garcia
13:10-13:20	<i>LDN related tools and experiences in the Region</i> Nicole Harari and Akmal Akramkhanov , WOCAT
13:20-13:30	<i>Closing remarks</i> Anna Tenberg , Adjunct Professor at Lund University