



# Baaistel

30 Years Promoting  
Sustainable Development



## Land Degradation Neutrality Knowledge Management And Learning Initiative

GEF Secretariat Brown Bag Lunch

December 6<sup>th</sup> 2023



# Opening remarks



Since 2015, the LDN framework is the main approach to implement the UNCDD's agenda. However, there is not enough documented experience with its application, performance, and results.



The overall objective is to ***learn from ongoing applications of the LDN framework in GEF's Land Degradation and related multi-focal area projects addressing LDN.***



This knowledge management and learning initiative generates knowledge for adaptive management and should support subsequently achieving better results; promote the improved design of future projects; and help to achieve durable impact by enhancing understanding on practices that work best for mainstreaming LDN into national sustainable development agendas.

# Overview of the presentation

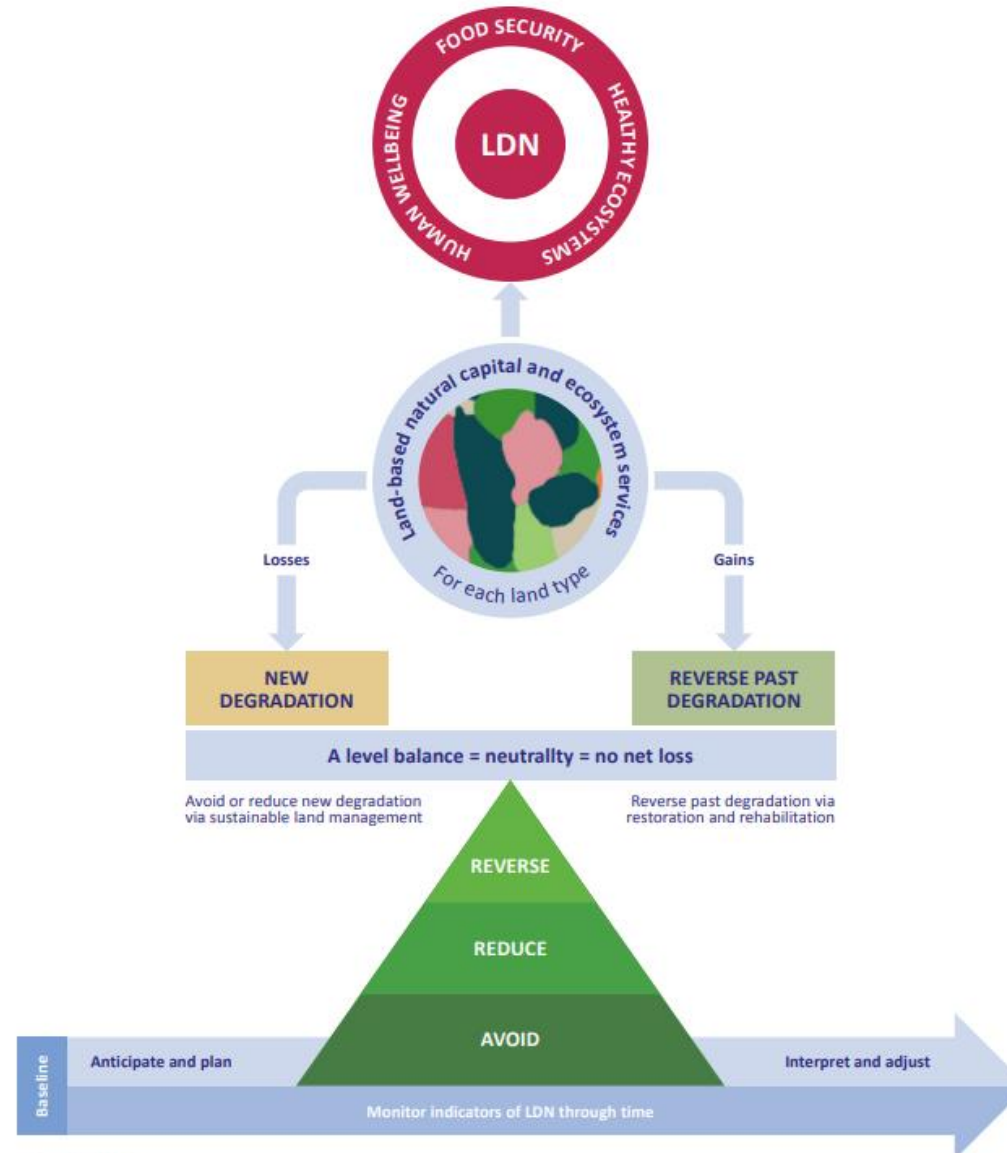
1. LDN concept definition and learning questions
2. Methodology
3. Good practices from 10 projects under implementation
4. Lessons learnt
5. Looking ahead: Implications of emerging lessons





# 1. LDN concept definition and learning questions

# Land Degradation Neutrality



# Learning questions



Q1: How do countries apply the LDN concept in GEF projects, and do they use the existing LDN guidelines and checklists?



Q2: Are the GEF projects designed to support mainstreaming of the LDN concept into national policy and regulatory frameworks?



Q3: How are projects planning to monitor LDN interventions?



Q4: Is the LDN framework used to promote policy coherence?



Q5. How do LDN projects address gender equality and women empowerment; private sector engagement; and drought?



## 2. Methodology

# Two-step analytical process

## Step 1: Portfolio review

- A rapid qualitative assessment of PIFs and PFDs for the entire portfolio of 50 LDN projects and two programs for the level of integration of the LDN concept in project design, using a **word frequency search**.
- This step of the analysis focused on answering the question ***How do countries apply the LDN concept in GEF projects?*** by looking at three dimensions of LDN:
  - 1) **Proposed Pathways** (i.e. What is the evidence of projects adopting an LDN pathway to achieve transformational change?);
  - 2) **Synergies** (i.e. What is the evidence of projects actively looking at providing multiple environmental and socio-economic benefits through integrated approaches, with a focus on marginalized and vulnerable groups?); and
  - 3) **Trade-Offs** (i.e. What is the evidence of projects looking at both gains and losses towards achieving a balanced system?).

## Step 2: In-depth review

- Sampling of 10 projects which ranked well on LDN concept integration and representative of overall portfolio composition
- Review of project documents, PIRs, MTRs (if available)
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Going into more depth on emerging issues identified in the first step of the analysis



# Projects reviewed in depth



# Projects reviewed in depth

GEF ID	Project name	IP/GEF Period	Country	FA	Agency
10299	Kazakhstan Resilient Agroforestry and Rangeland Management Project	Drylands IP, GEF-7	Kazakhstan	MFA (FSP)	WB/FAO
10249	Promoting Dryland Sustainable Landscapes and Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Steppe of Mongolia	Drylands IP, GEF-7	Mongolia	MFA (FSP)	FAO
10594	Burundi Landscape Restoration and Resilience Project	Food Systems IP, GEF-7	Burundi	MFA (FSP)	WB
10588	Sustainable land management and restoration of productive landscapes in river basins for the implementation of national targets of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in Panama	GEF-7	Panama	LD (MSP)	FAO
10356	Conservation and sustainable management of lakes, wetlands, and riparian corridors as pillars of a resilient and land degradation neutral Aral basin landscape supporting sustainable livelihoods	GEF-7	Uzbekistan	MFA (FSP)	UNDP
10814	LDN Target-Setting and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in Western Andes and Coastal areas	GEF-7	Ecuador	LD (FSP)	FAO
10161	Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainable Land Management to improve livelihoods and protect biodiversity in Nauru	GEF-7	Nauru	MFA (FSP)	UNEP
9759	Promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Through Strengthening Legal and Institutional Framework, Capacity Building and Restoration of Most Vulnerable Mountain Landscapes	GEF-6	North Macedonia	LD (FSP)	UNEP
9586	Contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting by Demonstrating the LDN Approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for Scaling up at National Level	GEF-6	Turkiye	LD (FSP)	FAO
9426	Namibia Integrated Landscape Approach for Enhancing Livelihoods and Environmental Governance to Eradicate Poverty (NILALEG)	GEF-6	Namibia	MFA (FSP)	UNDP



# 3. Good practices from 10 projects under implementation

# 1. Strengthening cross-sectoral coordination for LDN

Countries are applying different and innovative models for cross-sectoral coordination, adapted to the specific country context.



Common entry points for developing governance arrangements around LDN have been:

Integrated Land Use Planning (ILUP) and IWRM

Setting up LDN monitoring frameworks, including jointly with monitoring and reporting frameworks of other MEAs

## 2. Approaches and tools for integrating LDN in local planning

The LDN concept requires an application across spatial scales



Integrating LDN in local planning requires, amongst others:

Developing tools to integrate the LDN concept into local planning processes

Working with local stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, acknowledging them as holders of valuable traditional knowledge on SLM which can inform decision-making, as well as actively engages them as environmental stewards.

Developing the data/information basis to enable to translate targets to the sub-national level

Building the capacity at local level to contribute to the continuous monitoring of progress towards LDN, including through strong vertical coordination mechanisms

# 3. Addressing land tenure through LDN



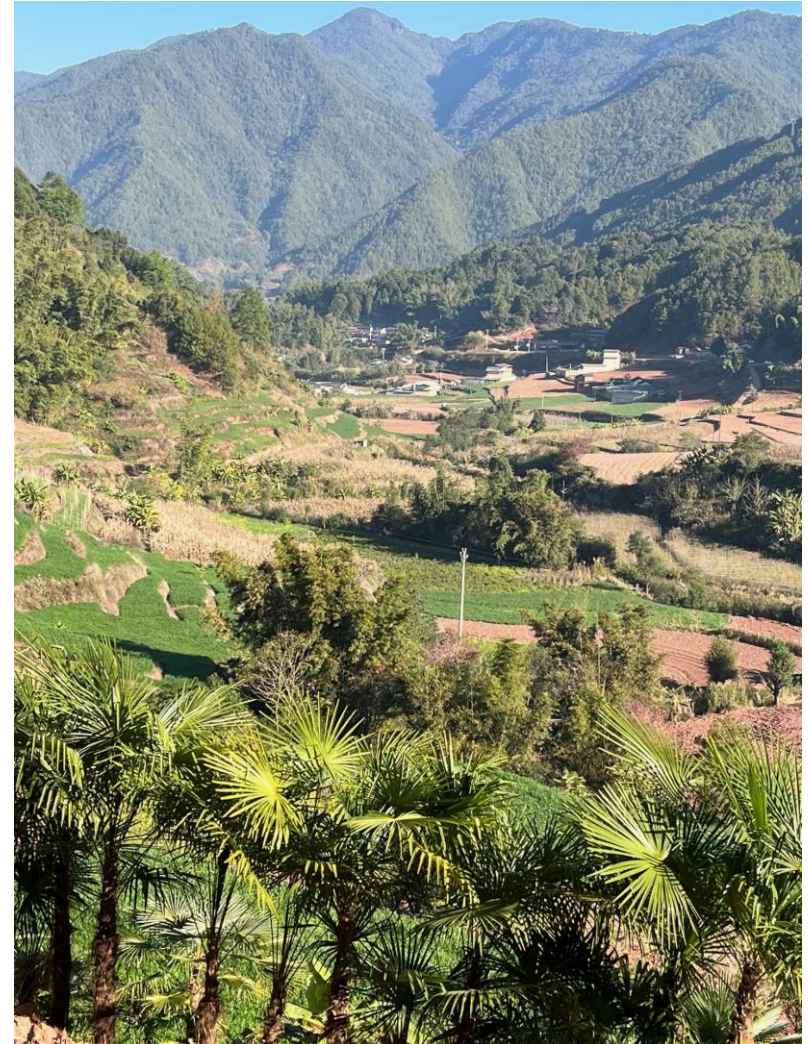
Land tenure considerations are frequently mentioned as an important enabling condition for achieving LDN.



Addressing land tenure is a complex process, with needs varying widely across jurisdictions, and cannot be addressed by the LDN framework alone.



Yet, some LDN projects have demonstrated successful approaches to tackling land tenure issues and promote **responsible and inclusive governance**, which can have deep impacts on local communities and promote gender equality .



# 4. Using the LDN Framework to enhance policy coherence



Projects are using the LDN framework as an entry point to enhance policy coherence for greater impact.



Projects are analyzing existing policy and legal frameworks and identifying entry points for LDN mainstreaming; working on enhancing policy coherence to address underlying barriers to achieving LDN; and some address the knock-on effects of eventual policy changes on institutional arrangements.



Interventions targeting policy coherence include:

Revising and updating policy and regulatory frameworks to address perverse incentives

Using the LDN framework to foster integration across the Rio conventions,

Making linkages to other priority areas based on context, such as food security, livestock and rangeland management, biodiversity conservation

# 5. Monitoring LDN in practice

Monitoring LDN can be quite complex and requires extensive geospatial data; data systems; effective mechanisms to collect, manage, and process data; capacity to analyze data and to integrate that information for convention reporting and decision-making.



Projects proposed varied approaches to monitoring LDN, in line with national contexts and capacities, and often highlighting opportunities for synergies with other conventions.



Interventions could be categorized as follows:

Integration of LDN into existing national monitoring and reporting systems

Development of new LDN monitoring systems

Project-level monitoring only



# 6. Engaging with private sector actors for LDN



Private sector actors' engagement is central to the success of LDN.



Countries are engaging with the private sector to improve access to markets, finance, and technologies, as well as to promote more sustainable practices. There is a strong focus on value chains.



These efforts contribute to countries' actions to rehabilitate and restore land, as well as improve livelihood opportunities.

# 7. Leveraging innovative financing mechanisms for LDN



Multiple projects set out ambitious plans to develop innovative financial mechanisms to support LDN.



Different mechanisms being proposed by countries are adapted to their individual contexts and aim to tackle the long-term financial sustainability of LDN interventions.



Several projects set out to find ways to develop bankable projects for the LDN Fund, an investment vehicle leveraging public money to raise private capital for sustainable land projects.

# 8. Gender

Across projects, gender is being addressed extensively.



The barriers facing women to actively engage in supporting LDN are often broadly similar across projects, with some local nuances which are carefully considered to tailor project interventions.



These barriers are being tackled through entry points such as:

Engagement of women in monitoring and knowledge management to foster capacity development

Tackling land tenure issues through policy interventions

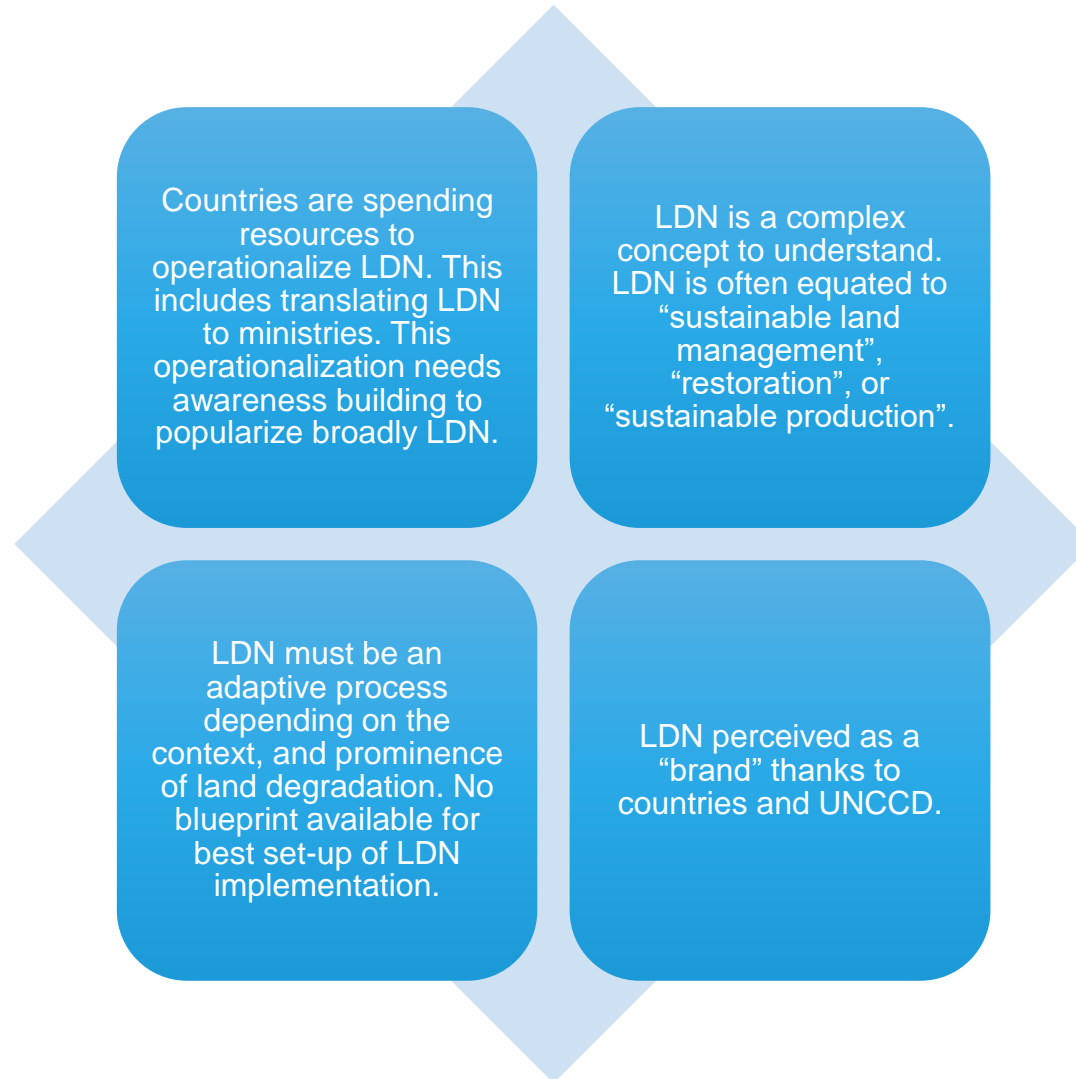
Awareness raising

Support for land registration

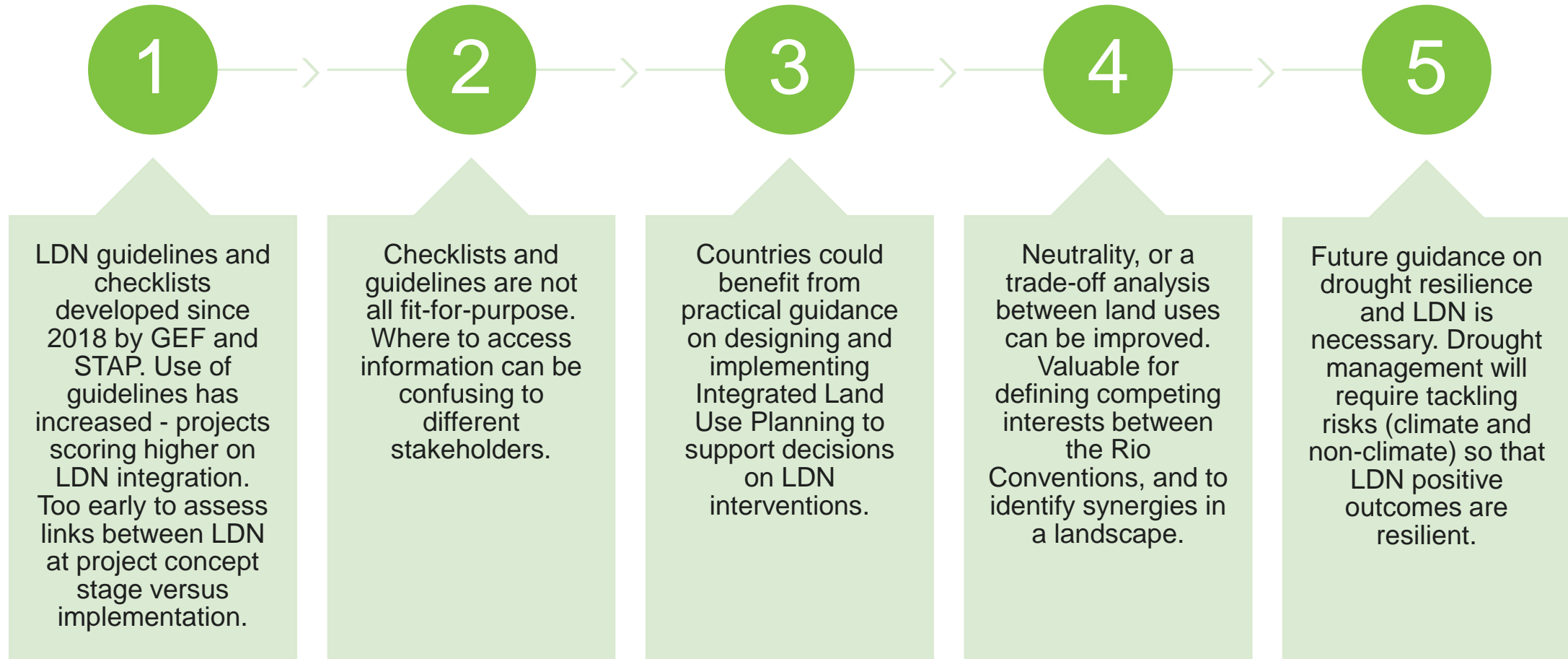


# 5. Lessons learnt

# 1. LDN is a scientific concept that needs to be tailored to national and local realities.



## 2. LDN guidelines have a positive impact on effective integration of the LDN concept in project design.



### 3. Governance for LDN is multi-dimensional and needs to take into consideration vertical coordination; cross-sectoral (horizontal) coordination; planning processes; land tenure; and monitoring.



A diagnostics of governance is required to identify entry points for supporting an enabling environment for LDN.



LDN implementation is not a step-wise approach, or a 'a one-size fits all'.



Addressing gaps/capacity development needs for different LDN governance dimensions requires tailoring to each country's context.



Existing and planned institutions; mechanisms; systems; etc., need to be leveraged to reduce duplication of efforts, or added loads through LDN implementation.

## 4. Numerous challenges and information gaps still exist in setting, updating, revising, and monitoring voluntary LDN targets.



Data is a key enabler for informed decision-making at all levels, including for private sector actors.



Integrated Land Use Planning is key to achieving LDN, but it requires information on land degradation status and trends; land potential; socio-economic data and gender.



Variability in data accessibility exists between countries: from defining baselines to monitoring progress against targets, with access to geospatial data which is central to LDN implementation to identify gains and losses, appearing particularly challenging.



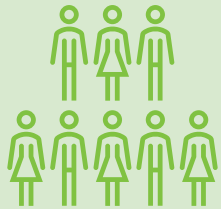
Voluntary LDN targets often need updating or revising, for example in cases where indicators were poorly defined or are difficult to measure.



## 5. Fostering an inclusive approach through LDN is essential to ensure sustainability and impact.



Recognizing and engaging with multiple stakeholders throughout project design, implementation and monitoring stage is a key entry point to build ownership and support the long-term sustainability of interventions and achieve LDN. However, fostering engagement is a difficult task which requires intensive resources, and proper incentives.



It is critical to develop a good understanding of gender-specific challenges related to land degradation, including those associated with cultural norms, as a first step towards more effective inclusion of women.





## 6. Looking ahead: Some implications of emerging lessons

# Implications of emerging lessons: Countries and UNCCD

- The LDN framework should be translated into a more understandable and politically attractive concept
- There is no blueprint for LDN. Countries need to set up a structured process adapted to their specific context.
- Countries need LDN guidelines which are more practice-oriented, enable the assessment for LDN action entry points, which could be monitoring, legal framework, capacity needs assessment, gap analysis for LDN
- Monitoring and reporting on LDN needs to be facilitated so that global progress towards LDN can be assessed in a timely manner
- Emerging issues that are being addressed by the convention (e.g. proactive drought management) should not be seen separate but linked to the LDN concept



# Implications of emerging lessons: GEF Partnership

- ◆ Initially, countries need a technical support (tools) to set up, monitor, and update LDN targets. In a second phase, in view of implementation, countries need a different support to influence sectoral policies, institutions, and land-use planning at subnational level.
- ◆ LDN to be mainstreamed better as entry point to national policy coherence
- ◆ The GEF Secretariat should continue providing learning opportunities, where advice is tailored to the needs of the local level
- ◆ Land tenure needs to be more systematically addressed in project design and implementation
- ◆ The GEF LDFA strategy should continue to be aligned with LDN, while establishing links to other emerging issues





# Questions and discussion



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