

**Practical Guidance for the Land Degradation Neutrality Conceptual Framework
*How to implement LDN interventions in projects and programs.***

STAP/GEF side event

UNCCD COP 14

September 11th 2019 at 6-8 p.m.

MET-06

Objectives: The objective of the side event is to strengthen capacities of countries that have pledged to ‘strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world’, to design and implement measures/strategies/plans to advance land degradation neutrality (LDN) through projects financed by the Global Environment Facility and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD.

A Practical guide prepared by GEF STAP (<http://www.stapgef.org/draft-guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality>) will be presented that describes steps that project developers can follow to implement UNCCD’s “Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality” (LDN-CF). These steps describe how to apply the response hierarchy of avoid-reduce-reverse degradation, and how to undertake integrated land use planning to ensure that losses are balanced by gains achieved through land restoration, or rehabilitation – in order to achieve neutrality. The event will also seek input on the guidelines from stakeholders in the audience. Stakeholders’ input will be considered to refine the guidelines in possible future iterations, as well as inform STAP’s views on capacity-building needs for LDN implementation.

Why this matters?

The event will contribute to the COP14’s agenda on controlling and reversing further loss of productive land from desertification, land degradation and drought. The event will describe how an approach to LDN can be an effective process, and tool, to maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services and functions provided by land resources.

The recent IPCC report on Climate change and Land concludes that “*Many interventions to achieve land degradation neutrality commonly also deliver climate change adaptation and mitigation benefits. The pursuit of land degradation neutrality provides impetus to address land degradation and climate change simultaneously*”. Through a set of planned actions based on the response hierarchy of ‘avoid, reduce, and reverse’ land degradation, the event will explain and showcase the importance of LDN in achieving multiple benefits through sustainable land management, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation.

The seventh phase of the GEF is supporting countries in their pursuit of LDN, within the Land Degradation focal area, and in the Impact Programs, particularly the Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program, the Food Systems and Land Use Restoration Integrated Program, The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program, and the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program - Phase II. The practical guidelines, and the event, will target GEF LDN interventions. Emphasis will be made on how GEF projects and programs can be designed and implemented using the LDN practical guidance and the Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (LDN-TPPS), developed by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD in collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat, the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface - in consultation with the GEF.

The structure of the side event will be as follows (The side event will be approximate 1.5 hours long.):

1. Introduction by Gustavo Fonseca, Director of Programs, Global Environment Facility: Interventions targeting LDN in GEF-7, and reflections on LDN links with the IPCC's Special Report on Climate Change and Land. - 3 minutes
2. Introduction on GEF's support to LDN: Ulrich Apel (GEF Secretariat) - 5 minutes
3. Land degradation neutrality: why it matters and how it is done (video) - 5 minutes
4. An introduction to LDN guidelines for projects (<http://www.stapgef.org/draft-guidelines-land-degradation-neutrality>): An overview of guidelines will be presented, explaining how they can be applied to design LDN interventions in projects and programs: Annette Cowie - 15 minutes
5. An overview of LDN in the Dryland Sustainable Landscape Impact Program. (The presentation will feature how the Drylands Impact Program will apply LDN to achieve its objective on avoiding, reducing, and reversing further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands.): Thomas Hammond (FAO) - 10 minutes
6. Panel Discussion. Two, or three, representatives from GEF projects that have recently been approved and will be implementing aspects of LDN will be invited to discuss the perceived usefulness of the guidelines in enhancing countries' capacities for LDN implementation. The interactive discussion will include questions from the public, and the session will focus on the projects' needs for guidance on planning and implementing LDN projects; to what extent are the guidelines perceived to be useful; how can LDN guidance be strengthened to meet LDN project needs; among other technical capacity needs. Moderator: Graciela Metternicht. - 40 minutes

The panelists are:

- Juan Carlos Mendoza (Global Mechanism): Why we need Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (LDN-TPPS) and how the Global Mechanism 'assesses' transformative projects ('the checklist').
- Thomas Hammond (FAO): A look into the FAO/GEF projects on: 1) "LDN Target-Setting and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in Western Andes and Coastal Areas in Ecuador; and, 2) "CSIDS-SOILCARE Phase1: Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Multi-country soil management initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and climate-resilient food systems.
- Edward Millard and Rosy Choudhury (Rainforest Alliance): A look into UN Environment/Rainforest Alliance/GEF project on "Transforming agricultural systems and strengthening local economies in high biodiversity areas of India through sustainable landscape management and public-private finance.
- Jonathan Davies (IUCN): Experiences in applying the LDN target setting project at the country level

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