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REPORT



Final Review of the Programme

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“Catalytic Support
to Implement the
convention to
Combat
Desertification in
West Asia and
North Africa –
Phase V”

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The views expressed in this Final Review Report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNDP/GC-RED or the MFA of Finland.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

10YSP	10 Years Strategy Plan of the UNCCD for the Decade of Desertification
AC	Advisory Committee
ASAIL	Action for Sustainable Agro-Industry in Lebanon
CC	Climate change
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CCD	Convention to Combat Desertification
CCM	Climate change mitigation
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CMG	Core Management Group
CO	Country Office
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC (UNCCD)	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
DDC	Drylands Development Center
DDC-AS	Drylands Development Center Regional Office for Arab States
DLDD	Desertification, Land degradation and Drought
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GC-RED	Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification
GDI	Global Drylands Imperative
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoF	Government of Finland
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation / German International Cooperation
IDDP	Integrated Drylands Development Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term review
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NR	Natural resources
PA	Programme Advisor
PM	Programme Manager
POS	Programme Oasis Sud
PT	Programme Team
RMF	Results Monitoring Framework
SLM	Sustainable land management
TA	Technical assistance
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States Dollar

Summary

The “Programme of Catalytic Support to Implement the Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa - Phase V” started in January 2013, with a three-month Inception phase and was planned to end in 2016. However, the Programme has been granted a six-month no-cost extension and it will be implemented until the end of June 2017.

The Phase V is an extension of the previous phase and builds on the achievements of the Programme to date. It is designed to pursue Programme support while accommodating emerging development priorities and the recommendations of the independent evaluation in June 2011. It is financed by the Government of Finland with the overall objective to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in West Asia and North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia – in North Africa – and Lebanon, Syria and Jordan – in West Asia), specifically its 10-Year Strategic Plan with focus on improving the living conditions of affected populations (Strategic Objective 1), improving the conditions of affected ecosystems (Strategic Objective 2), and mobilizing partners and resources for drylands development (Strategic Objective 4).

Its purpose is to mobilize partners and resources to improve the living conditions of local populations and the management of natural resources in areas affected by desertification and drought in Programme countries. This is to be achieved through the provision of policy advice, technical support and catalytic funding towards: a) Mainstreaming dryland development issues into policy and planning frameworks; b) Enhancing livelihoods and building resilience of dryland communities; c) Improving the management of natural resources; d) Promoting gender equity and empowerment of dryland women; and e) Facilitation of knowledge sharing and South-South Cooperation

The Programme is a component of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Integrated Drylands Development Programme (IDDP), a global initiative in support of UNCCD implementation. It is implemented by the UNDP Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification (GC-RED) (former Drylands Development Centre), designed to advance sustainable development in drylands. The national activities in Programme participating countries are being channelled through UNDP country offices for execution by national partners.

The intervention is considered to be **relevant**. The Programme contributes to global UNDP efforts, particularly in promoting sustainable development in the drylands. The Programme objectives were found to be in line with Finland’s Development Policy (Government Decision-in-principle, 16 February 2012). Also the Programme, as it has been designed, takes into account the promotion of the cross-cutting objectives (gender equality, climate sustainability and reduction of inequality) of Finland’s development policy and development cooperation. The Programme contributes to promotion of employment and pro-poor growth, and to fulfilling Finnish obligations under the UNCCD.

The Programme is found to be relevant to the national priorities of Programme participating governments.

The Programme is considered to be **efficient** in terms of Programme implementation and monitoring. The budget is considered to be in proportion to expected results and it has sufficient flexibility.

The findings on the basis of the reporting and the interviews held indicate that the programme **effectiveness** has been at a good level. It has successfully contributed to the international processes and events (CCD; COP; CRIC; UNDDD) to combat desertification and addressing the poor areas in drylands, and working on building resilience of drylands communities through livelihoods development. The amount of resources mobilised (catalytic effect) has been remarkable and the feedback on Programme's work on building of local capacities has been positive. Also, the support to women's empowerment in drylands has been effective.

The key issue regarding the **sustainability** of a project/programme is the institutionalization of results and impacts; scaling-up and replication of good practices; and the documentation of the good practices and lessons learned, with dissemination of the produced materials. The Programme has aimed for sustainability with the strategy of securing the strong national ownership of the interventions, trying to mobilise funding and resources for implementation mainly from national resources. The programme strategy to strengthen the capacity of national partners in project design and implementation has worked towards this end to, as so has the documentation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learnt.

There is clear evidence that the national level work will continue and that the capacity building efforts and the advocacy and promotion work towards sustainability. By working closely with national authorities, supporting their work, the programme has built strong ownership within participating countries. This is further enhanced by working on various levels (at policy level and regional, national and local levels). The catalytic nature of the programme is one of the key issues for sustainability. The programme has been successful in mobilising funds and resources for development interventions to implement the CCD, thus securing the continuation of the Programme work.

The support to the documentation of the good practices and lessons learned, with dissemination of the material, and the South-South cooperation that strengthens the exchange of experiences between the countries and actors, have both worked towards the sustainability of the Programme results.

The short remaining time and the reducing resources for implementation result in the situation where hardly any additional activities and tasks, in addition to the remaining work plan activities, can be implemented. The programme has only half a year's time to secure the completion of the handing over processes. This puts a lot of pressure on the programme team and **the exit strategy**, especially as one team member will end her work already in the end of March due to budgetary reasons. There are still important work plan activities in progress, so the Programme needs to give priority to finalise them.

Other activities that the Programme should work on during the exit period are: securing that the good practices and lessons learned that the Programme has contributed to and supported are documented and shared with the stakeholders; and continuing capacity building efforts, according to the resources available for emerging needs.

The long-standing cooperation between UNDP and Finland in the context of the programme has been, in general, a success, thus one should explore possibilities for future cooperation.

The catalytic approach of the Programme was efficient and effective in promoting inclusive resilient drylands development and presents a good model for replication by similar development programmes. There is a need to pursue and scale-up many of the development efforts supported by the Programme. Given the serious repercussions of the Syria crisis in the region, with implications also for Finland and the rest of Europe, one possible way forward could be cooperation based on the concept note "Catalytic resilience-based response to the Syria Crisis" prepared and submitted by the Programme as part of its exit strategy.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The '**Programme of Catalytic Support to Implement the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa**' has been implemented by the UNDP Drylands Development Centre since January 2001. It is financed by the Government of Finland with the overall objective to support the implementation of the UNCCD in West Asia and North Africa (*Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia* – in North Africa – and *Lebanon, Syria and Jordan* – in West Asia; later Programme countries), specifically its 10-Year Strategic Plan with focus on improving the living conditions of affected populations (Strategic Objective 1), improving the conditions of affected ecosystems (Strategic Objective 2), and mobilizing partners and resources for drylands development (Strategic Objective 4).

The Programme purpose is *to mobilize partners and resources to improve the living conditions of local populations and the management of natural resources in areas affected by desertification and drought in Programme countries*. This is to be achieved through the provision of policy advice, technical support and catalytic funding towards: *a) Mainstreaming dryland development issues into policy and planning frameworks; b) Enhancing livelihoods and building resilience of dryland communities; c) Improving the management of natural resources; d) Promoting gender equity and empowerment of dryland women; and e) Facilitation of knowledge sharing and South-South Cooperation*

The Programme is a component of the UNDP Integrated Drylands Development Programme (IDDP), a global initiative in support of UNCCD implementation. It is implemented by the **UNDP Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification (GC-RED)** (former Drylands Development Centre), designed to advance sustainable development in drylands. The Beirut Team (Programme Manager, Programme Advisor and Programme Assistant) serves as the implementing unit. The Programme Team provides policy advice and technical assistance and seeks catalytic funding to support CCD processes and drylands development in participating countries. Support to national activities is channelled through UNDP country offices and the agreed interventions/projects are executed by national partners within the framework of UNDP Country Programmes. Synergy and coordination with relevant existing/planned activities has been sought. Over the years, three independent evaluations (2004, 2008 & 2011) have concluded on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme.

The Phase V is an extension of the previous phase and builds on the achievements of the Programme to date. It is designed to pursue Programme support while accommodating emerging development priorities and the recommendations of the independent evaluation in June 2011. The total budget of the Programme Phase V is €3.0 million.

An Advisory Committee (AC), established as per the agreement between the UNDP and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland, provides strategic guidance and approves Programme reports and accounts. The Committee has met annually, however, during the year 2016 no meeting was organised. The remaining meeting will be organised in 2017, during the 6-month no-cost

extension period. The Committee is co-chaired by the UNDP and the MFA. It consists of a Core Management Group (CMG) including UNDP and MFA, and representatives from Programme countries, including national partners/institutions, CCD focal points and UNDP country offices.

The Programme has been operating on three levels, firstly supporting the partner countries to participate in international CCD process and providing support to CCD (*policy level*). Secondly it is working at the *national level* building capacities at the ministries and providing support to policy processes development, and thirdly, providing co-financing to initiatives (projects) at the *local level* for combatting desertification, within the framework of CCD. Additionally, given its strategic position between Africa and Asia, the Programme has acted as a platform for South-South Cooperation in the region, allowing the exchange of good practices between the countries (and continents).

The Programme Phase V started in January 2013, with a three-month Inception phase and was planned to end in 2016. However, the Programme has been granted a six-month no-cost extension and it will be implemented until the end of June 2017. During the inception phase the results framework of the Programme was developed further, on the basis of extensive consultations with partners to better guide the design of interventions and the reporting on results. A "Results Monitoring Framework" (RMF) was developed, with indicators, baselines and targets to be achieved under each result by the end of the Programme phase. The RMF was to be updated annually, based on progress with partners and to be presented to the Advisory Committee for approval. It constituted the basis for reporting on results and achievements.

The Programme follows Finnish development policy (2012) priorities and puts them into operation in selected Arab States, particularly with regard to UNCCD implementation and the promotion of sustainable development in the drylands. The Programme builds on a principle of partnership between Finland and the Region, and the UNDP as a programme implementing agency.

1.2 Scope and Methodology of the Review

The final review of the "Programme of Catalytic Support to Implement the Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa – Phase V" was carried out as a combination of a desk study and a short visit to the GC-RED office in Lebanon (Beirut, with a field visit to southern Lebanon), in November-December 2016. The review document is based on reviewing the existing documentation, discussions/interviews with the MFA Finland personnel, meetings with project personnel and selected stakeholders in Lebanon, and Skype/telephone interviews with programme stakeholders including the UNCCD Secretariat and UNDP GC-RED headquarters in Nairobi, as well as partners in Morocco, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia and Algeria.

The objectives of this Final review, according to the TOR, are as follows:

- To assess the performance, especially in relation to sustainability of the Programme based on the review of relevant documentation and discussions with Programme team and partners;

- To support finalizing the Exit Strategy of the Programme in order to enhance the sustainability of its achievements.

Issues to be assessed in the review, according to the ToR, are, as follows:

- The relevance of the Programme with respect to the national priorities of its partner countries, Finnish Development Cooperation Policy and emerging regional priorities;
- The programme efficiency;
- The effectiveness and impact;
- The intervention strategy, in terms of its implementation arrangements, network of partners including UNDP Country Offices, its flexibility/ responsiveness in adjusting to emerging regional priorities particularly in response to the Syria Crisis and its repercussions;
- The sustainability of results and benefits; in terms of national ownership and capacity building as well as documentation and dissemination of good practices and learned.

In addition, the mission will give its recommendation on the Programme exit strategy and explore a possible way forward for the long standing UNDP/Finland partnership.

The major documents reviewed are listed in Annex 2.

The stakeholders interviewed are listed in Annex 3.

2 Findings

2.1 The relevance of the programme with respect to the national priorities of its partner countries, Finnish Development Cooperation Policy and emerging regional priorities

2.1.1. Introduction

The Programme Mid-term evaluation in June 2011 confirmed the relevance of the Programme, stating that the objectives of the Programme are in line with the international development cooperation policy of the Government of Finland (GoF) and that they support the international development agenda, the fight against desertification as well as development priorities of partner countries. The Appraisal (March 2013) of the Phase V further confirmed the relevance.

The **development priorities** that the programme accommodates are, as follows:

i. CCD Ten-Year Strategic Plan: 1) Mobilize partners and resources; 2) Improve the living conditions of affected populations; 3) Improve the productivity of affected ecosystems; and indirectly 4) Generate global environmental benefits (biodiversity, climate change, ecosystem services).

ii. National priorities: The Programme supports its partner countries to meet their obligations under the UNCCD, particularly regarding the implementation

of priority actions identified in their National Action Plans (NAP) to Combat Desertification. It is designed to support national development priorities in terms of improving the livelihoods of local communities and the productivity of ecosystems in areas affected by desertification and drought.

iii. Finnish development policy: Poverty reduction, MDG achievement, inclusive growth and social equity as well as partner countries' needs and ownership, the rule of law, democracy, human rights and sustainable development. Supporting marginalized communities, empowering women for a more active role in development and promoting environmental sustainability are of paramount importance to Finland.

iv. UNDP strategic priorities: UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. The Programme contributes to global UNDP efforts, particularly in promoting sustainable development in the drylands in terms of poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and women's empowerment.

2.1.2. National priorities of the partner countries

The Programme countries are considered to belong to the world's most water-scarce areas and subject to serious land degradation due to a combination of natural and man-made factors. The limited water availability constrains development and is a major source of potential conflicts. The effects of climate change are already being felt in terms of more frequent and prolonged drought episodes exacerbating desertification and poverty.

The Programme countries have ratified the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and requested support for its implementation. The Programme is designed to support the member countries national development priorities, enhancing the livelihoods of local communities and improving productivity of ecosystems in areas affected by desertification and drought, and thus it supports the countries to meet their obligations under the UNCCD, particularly their priority actions identified in their National Action Plans (NAP) to Combat Desertification. The national projects are supported in poor areas such as Kasserine in Tunisia, Southern Morocco and Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, all projects addressing livelihoods development. This way, the Programme promotes poverty alleviation, inclusive growth and social equity. *All these approaches and the Programme activities (individual projects) are considered to be relevant to the national priorities of the participating countries.* The Programme is not focusing on the least developed countries (LDC), as all participating countries belong to the middle-income group of countries. The activities are, however, targeted in the least developed areas of the Programme countries.

The Programme supports the participating countries at three levels: supporting the countries to participate in international drylands development related processes (UNCCD), building capacities in local ministries under the NAPs, and supporting specific initiatives (projects) at the local level. All the Programme countries have drylands subject to desertification. The local initiatives of the Programme are implemented in areas that are vulnerable and

subject to deterioration of the productive systems that the poor rely on for their livelihoods. The Programme's contribution to the sustainable development of the drylands and to the development of livelihoods at the local level, is considered to be relevant to the stakeholders at the local level.

2.1.3. UNDP development policies

This Programme Phase V contributes to global UNDP efforts, particularly in promoting sustainable development in the drylands. Programme support focuses, among other things, on supporting the CCD (Convention to Combat Desertification) processes that aim at mainstreaming the drylands agenda into the policy-making process including contribution to CCD/COP and CRIC meetings, national reporting, alignment of NAPs with the 10-Year Strategic plan of the UNCCD and implementation of the action plan of the UNDDD. The objective is to "support the implementation of the UNCCD in West Asia and North Africa, specifically its 10-Year Strategic Plan with focus on improving the living conditions of affected populations (Strategic Objective 1), improving the conditions of affected ecosystems (Strategic Objective 2), and mobilizing partners and resources for drylands development (Strategic Objective 4)." Thus the Programme has been designed and implemented fully in line with UNDP development policies.

2.1.4. Finnish Development Cooperation Policy

The Programme was planned during Finland's previous government's development policy (*Government Decision-in-principle, 16 February 2012*). The policy priority areas were the human rights, inclusive green economies, sustainable management of natural resources and human development. The programme objectives were assessed to be in line with the mentioned policy in the Programme appraisal (March 2013).

The programme is designed to take into account the Finnish development policy in its implementation: *Poverty reduction, MDG achievement, inclusive growth and social equity as well as partner countries' needs and ownership are key priorities of Finnish development policy.* Finland policies emphasize the *rule of law, democracy, human rights and sustainable development.* Programme's work on *supporting marginalized communities, empowering women for a more active role in development and promoting environmental sustainability* are fully in line with the policies of Finland. The Programme contributes to the implementation of Finnish development policy in terms of *poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and women's empowerment in the drylands.* In participating countries, it operates through the national projects in areas where most of the poor and marginalized live, supports community mobilization, advocates for inclusiveness on the national development agenda and facilitates access to markets and resources. It thus contributes to the objective of inclusive and pro-poor growth and to fulfilling Finnish obligations under the UNCCD.

In 2016 the new Finnish Development Policy (*Government Report on Development Policy*) was published and the implementation of Finnish

development policy is currently guided by it. The aim of development policy is to support developing countries' efforts to *eradicate poverty and inequality and promote sustainable development*. The emphasis is now on *enhancing the rights and status of women and girls, strengthening the private sector in order to create decent jobs, supporting democratic and better-functioning societies, and contributes to the implementation of Finnish development policy in terms of poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and women's empowerment*.

The Programme contributes to women's empowerment and supporting their rights. It is also supporting the creation of livelihoods and jobs creation, and better functioning societies as well as poverty alleviation and it works for environmental sustainability. Therefore, the Programme is considered to be fully in line with the previous and the current Finnish Development Cooperation Policy. The Programme also contributes to fulfilling Finnish obligations under the UNCCD.

The Programme was planned under the period of the Millennium Development Goals. In September 2015 the UN also resolved to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and set 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, SDG 15 is relevant to this Programme: "*Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss*".



Picture 1: *Women's cooperative in Southern Lebanon, supported by the Programme. Products of the cooperative for sale in their shop.*

2.1.5. Emerging regional priorities

The most serious threat to the region is, especially in West-Asia, is the humanitarian and development crisis in Syria, with possible implications for larger area peace and security. The situation emphasises the need for national response plans for Lebanon and Jordan (and other countries, like Egypt and Turkey) to ensure protection and humanitarian assistance, and to strengthen the resilience of host communities. There are almost four million refugees being hosted in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Therefore, similar actions that have been implemented already by the Programme in Lebanon and Syria are badly needed. For example, in Syria the Programme support has been aimed at restoring livelihoods, enhancing food security and creating job opportunities for men and women. Actions done by the Programme in areas affected by Syria crisis are, as follows.

Lebanon:

- Support within the framework of the “Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme” to build the capacity of women’s agro-food cooperatives in communities hosting Syrian refugees;
- Agreements with the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Zahle (Bekaa) and Saida (South), respectively, to strengthen the production and marketing capacity of women’s agro-food cooperatives.
- Support for the design of vocational training programs for women and youth in eight Social Development Centers (SDCs) of the Ministry of Social Affairs to enhance their employability and hence their livelihood options in the context of the increasing pressure from the refugee crisis.

Syria:

- Policy & technical support for the implementation of the UNDP initiative “Emergency Assistance for the Restoration and Stabilization of Livelihoods of People Affected by the Crisis in Syria” under which support was given to the establishment of a dairy farm supported through the “Dar Al-Salam Food Processing Initiative”; and the “Badira Initiative for the Empowerment of Small Farmers” which made available fresh vegetables on the local market at reasonable prices.



Picture 2: *Food production in Syria, supported by the Programme*

The programme was reported to have been flexible in its response to emerging regional priorities. The Programme has taken into account and reacted to the emerging priorities during the Phase V and worked to build resilience, and therefore implemented relevant actions in the regional context.

Another emerging regional priority is the creation of jobs for the large group of unemployed youth that can be found in each of the participating countries. Youth employment challenges are a global policy issue, and the situation is of serious concern also in northern Africa, which has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the world. In addition, underemployment and job informality affect young people. For example, in Morocco four out of five unemployed people are between the ages of 15 – 34. Thus, the Programme support to livelihoods development and promotion of income generating activities is a very relevant action towards better employment opportunities of youth.

2.2 The efficiency of the intervention

The intended results of the Programme are, as follows:

- A. Mainstreaming drylands issues in development frameworks enhanced.
Activities implemented are, as follows
 - a. Advocacy for drylands on the international development agenda
 - b. Mainstreaming drylands issues into national development frameworks;

- c. Engaging and building the capacity of regional/local authorities in integrated drylands development to enhance synergy and mobilize resources;
 - d. Promoting investment in the drylands (public and private)
- B. Livelihoods of dryland communities improved and their resilience enhanced
 - C. Management of natural resources improved
 - D. Gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment enhanced
 - E. Experience sharing and South-South Cooperation facilitated (cross-cutting theme)

The performance of the Programme is assessed against the following outcome indicators:

1. Range of partners and amount of resources mobilized for drylands development;
2. Extent of improvement in living conditions of affected populations;
3. Extent of improvement in management of natural resources;
4. Level of improvement in women's living conditions and role in local development;
5. Extent of contribution to the advancement of UNCCD/drylands agenda;
6. Extent of enhancement of knowledge/experience of partners on drylands development.

The Programme works in a relatively complex regional context, with six participating countries, working through the network of UNDP offices and relevant national ministries and authorities. The Syria crisis has aggravated during the Phase V, however the Programme has been able to mobilise resources and support activities also in Syria. Its work in the poor areas within Tunisia and Morocco has continued.

The findings show good overall efficiency of the Programme. The Programme reporting shows that the implementation of the activities has been done in a timely manner and according to the annual work plan budgets, following the Programme Results Based Framework. The programme Team has assessed in their reports the production of the targets under the results and the progress percentage which helps define the priorities during the implementation but at the same time sets targets to the monitoring system. Evidence gathered through the documentation and the interviews confirms the validity of the monitoring and the reporting of the Programme.

The interviewees gave good feedback on the relevance of the programme documents in general and the logical framework of the programme. The interviewees considered that the programme approach has been appropriate and that it has enhanced efficiency. The capacity building activities implemented by the programme were considered to be crucial for the results.

The result-based planning process and the use of the results-based framework has apparently benefitted the production of results. The Programme has advanced well, and produced results according to the needs of beneficiaries and according to prepared plans. The Programme has contributed to the production of a lot of materials, such as project documents, good practice and lessons learned publications, and gender related policy papers.

Considering the relatively small team, a good balance was found between available resources and the implemented activities at the regional and national level. The Programme has focused on supporting a limited number of projects in each country, in relatively poor areas, and the projects have produced results that can be used as a learning cases for expanding of pilot projects to larger interventions (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia). The functional linkages to each participating country, both the ministries and the UNDP offices, have clearly enhanced the efficiency of the work. The active communication between the programme office and the national actors has been active and regular, which for its part shows the efficiency of the work done.

The evidence shows that Programme has been particularly efficient regarding the catalytic role to mobilize development resources to advance drylands development and UNCCD development in partner countries. The Annex 4 (Synthesis of the Programme initiatives and their impact) lists the funds so far mobilised during this phase.

The long implementation history and the Programme document, as planned, provided good preconditions for an efficient Programme implementation and monitoring. The funds allocation in the budget for Phase V result areas was seemingly done on the basis of the long experience of the implementation of previous phases. The established wide project partner network (national governments, local partners, UNDP offices in Programme countries, UNCCD, UNDDC, the Finnish Government, etc.) has supported an efficient implementation.

The Programme strategy was intended to be flexible and opportunistic, and the catalytic approach was emphasised, thus an important area of action of the Programme is targeted towards the co-funding of individual projects with other project financiers (fund mobilisation – catalytic role). This has had an effect in annual work planning and budgeting. It appears that the work plans and budgets have been in proportion to expected results with sufficient flexibility during the implementation.

2.3 Effectiveness

Result 1. Mainstreaming drylands issues in development frameworks enhanced

The Programme activities have focused on three levels, policy, national and local level, as follows: 1) Engagement in UNCCD processes to advance the drylands development agenda at global levels; 2) Support national efforts for drylands development with focus on the sub-national/local levels.

The Programme has participated in COP and CRIC meetings for coordination, promotion and advocacy purposes, and contributed to UNDDD and UNCCD events. The Programme reporting and the interviews held support the view that the Programme has been successful in its work regarding the mentioned events and processes. The feedback by the interviewed UNDP officials and the national stakeholders on the promotion and advocacy work that the Programme has done during Phase V was positive.

The interviewees also commented very positively on the Programme support towards the national efforts for drylands development. According to the Programme reporting, the progress towards the targets has been good, though some targets are still to be reached in terms of the support to the national actors in Tunisia, Lebanon and Algeria. In general, the work to achieve the result, assessed especially via outcome indicator (5) *Extent of contribution to the advancement of UNCCD/drylands agenda* appears to have been effective.

Result 2. Livelihoods of dryland communities improved and their resilience enhanced

The Programme targeted its efforts to enhance drylands livelihoods in partner countries. Additional emphasis is put on gender equity & women's empowerment, sustainable energy and South-South Cooperation/exchange between Programme countries. Indicators and targets defined for this result feed into outcome indicators 1, 2, 4 and 6 namely: 1. Range of partners and amount of resources mobilized for drylands development; 2. Extent of improvement in living conditions of affected populations; 4. Level of improvement in women's living conditions and role in local development; and 6. Extent of enhancement of knowledge/experience of partners on drylands development

The progress regarding this result is on good level too, though there are still targets to be achieved by the end of the Programme. The interviewees assessed very positively the Programme support to national initiatives (for example ArtGold & Agrofood cooperatives in Lebanon; Kasserine Tunisia, Syria projects). The project in Tunisia is still in progress to get its financing through GEF funding, however the decision should be made in December 2016/January 2017.

The Programme has managed to mobilise a remarkable amount of funding for drylands development. Partners and resources mobilised have been presented in Annex 4 (*Table on Synthesis of programme initiatives and their impact*) together with the figures on the amount of direct and indirect beneficiaries (estimates by the Programme). The Programme has invested approximately 1,65 million USD for individual projects (either planning or implementation) while the total amount of mobilised funds during Phase V is approximately 13.8 million USD in cash, in addition to significant in-kind contributions from national governments. Out of this amount, approximately 6,9 million USD are GEF funds while the rest are from the Governments of the participating countries, and a variety of donors like EU, Government of Japan and Coca-Cola foundation. There are still 6,5 million USD of GEF funding in the pipeline for Tunisia project. The funds mobilised from UN organisations (UNDP, UNCCD) are 775 000 USD in total. The amount of direct beneficiaries in the projects supported by the Programme can be estimated to be over 30 000 (based on the figures given in Annex 4).

The programme has also promoted renewable energy technologies, although the scale was small, especially considering the vast possibilities regarding solar energy utilisation in the region. This was not, however, a key area of action in the programme.



Picture 3: *Cultivation of Syrian oregano for za'atar production, by women's agro-food cooperative in Southern Lebanon. The drip irrigation enables two harvests per year. Seedlings and drip irrigation system were provided by the Programme; land and labour by the women's cooperative.*

South-South Cooperation: The feedback by the interviewees on the Programme efforts to achieve the targets regarding the south-south cooperation was positive. Also the reporting shows that the targets have been achieved and the Programme has provided a suitable platform for the cooperation. The main event on this end, apart from the information given in the programme website, document sharing and Advisory Committee meetings, was the support to the preparation of a major publication on good practices within "Programme Oasis Sud" (POS) which served as the basis for a South-South Cooperation mission to Morocco by participants from Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. This mission facilitated experience exchange in terms of sustainable, resilient and inclusive development in the drylands at both national and regional level. The mission involved 20 international and 40 national participants including high-level officials and ambassadors.

Women's empowerment is dealt with separately under Result 4.

Result 3. Management of natural resources improved

The Programme promoted the sustainable land/water management in partner countries. Indicators and targets defined for this result feed into outcome indicators 1, 3, 4 and 6 namely: 1. Range of partners and amount of resources mobilized for drylands development; 3. Extent of improvement in management of natural resources; 4. Level of improvement in women's living conditions and

role in local development; and 6. Extent of enhancement of knowledge/experience of partners on drylands development.

The majority of the targets under this result are related to the work in participating countries, and are partly overlapping with the Result 2 targets. The Programme has supported projects in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Jordan under this result area. The targets have been widely reached according to the reports and the interviews held gave positive views on the work toward the production of this result. The targets are related to the projects and their activities supported, capacities strengthened and resources mobilised (see Annex 4 table on Synthesis of programme initiatives and their impact). The same comment on the funding that has been mobilised effectively as regarding the Result 2 applies also this result.

Result 4. Empowerment of dryland women promoted

Indicators and targets defined for this result feed into outcome indicators 1, 4 and 6 namely: 1. Range of partners and amount of resources mobilized for drylands development; 4. Level of improvement in women's living conditions and role in local development; and 6. Extent of enhancement of knowledge/experience of partners on drylands development

In addition to the support within country activities (under the Results 2 and 3) the Programme i) Supports relevant national initiatives to enhance the role of women in drylands development; and ii) consolidates Programme efforts towards gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the form of reports, publications and documentaries for advocacy & experience exchange.

Gender mainstreaming has been a key priority for both of the UNCCD and the Government of Finland. In the programme budget (Programme proposal), altogether 7.4 % of Programme funds are allocated for Result 4: "Gender and Women's empowerment". In addition, the funds under each result area made the total funding plan for gender and women's empowerment related activities almost 10 % of the Programme funding.

In reality, in addition to the funds allocated for Result 4 and specific gender activities under each result, many of the Programme's livelihood activities focus on women, such as support to women's cooperatives in Lebanon, women-headed households in Syria, women's cooperatives and associations within the framework of COS in Morocco. These activities have been implemented with funds allocated for Result 1 (Livelihoods) and served the *dual purpose* of enhancing livelihoods *and* promoting women's empowerment.

It can be estimated that the overall budget allocation that has served women's empowerment is about 25-26 % of the total Programme budget (see Table 1), exceeding clearly the planned 10% allocation, as the Programme Team has exerted conscious efforts to promote the women's empowerment agenda in all its activities wherever possible. One can say that in addition to be a separate result of the Programme, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment has been a cross-cutting issue as well, and taken into account under all of the result areas.

At the policy level the Programme-supported targets are the implementation of the Windhoek Initiative on the "Empowerment of Drylands Women", launched at the "Gender Policy Forum" at UNCCD/COP 11 (Namibia, September

2013), and the organization of the "Gender Day" on the occasion of UNCCD/COP12 in partnership with the UNNCD Secretariat, FAO, IUCN and the University of Namibia. The outcomes of the Gender Day were reflected in the Ankara Ministerial Declaration (COP12/L.9) in which ministers committed to "dedicate ourselves to promoting gender equality and the role of women as actors of change in addressing Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought." The Programme has also supported the preparation of a series of policy papers on the "Empowerment of Drylands Women": "Gender and Drylands Governance: Empowering women for change", "Strengthening Drylands Women's Land Rights: Local contexts, Global change" and "Achieving Dryland Women's Empowerment: Environmental Resilience and Social Transformation Imperatives". These have been widely disseminated by the UNCCD Secretariat in various occasions since the publication in 2015. For the COP 13 the Programme is preparing a training module on the implementation of a Gender Policy for UNCCD. This module will be available for COP13.

The targets have been achieved under this result, and the result has been produced in an effective manner. The following table 1 shows the estimated expenditure for gender and women's empowerment.

Table 1: *The share of the Programme funds allocated for gender / women's empowerment*

Activity/Country	Overall Budget (USD)	% for gender/women empowerment (Estimate)	Allocated for gender/women empowerment, USD
UNCCD processes (Mainstreaming)	37 500	55	20 625
Lebanon (Livelihoods/Gender)	250 000	90	225 000
Syria (Livelihoods)	250 000	75	187 500
Jordan (Mainstreaming/SLM)	140 000	25	35 000
Algeria (Mainstreaming/Livelihoods)	150 000	40	60 000
Morocco (Mainstreaming/Livelihoods/Gender)	200 000	75	150 000
Tunisia (Mainstreaming/SLM/gender)	200 000	30	60 000
South-South Cooperation (Partners meetings/SSC mission)	90 000	50	45 000
	1 317 500		783 125

Result 5. Programme efficiently managed and efficiently supporting CCD implementation/ dryland development in partner countries

The targets under this result are related to policy, technical and financial support provision for drylands development, project design, contribution to UNCCD processes reporting and experience sharing. Indicators and targets defined for this result feed into all outcome indicators of the Programme. The targets are partly overlapping with other results, however, making it difficult to assess which targets belong under which result. The reporting shows the progress to be good and the feedback from the interviewed stakeholders confirms the efficient management of the Programme and the positive views on the Programme support to CCD implementation in partner countries. The interviewees in partner countries emphasised the importance of the project team's work and support under each of the Programme results.

Overall Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the Programme is mainly decided by how well the five results contribute to the achievement of the programme purpose, *"To mobilize partners and resources to improve the living conditions of local populations and the management of natural resources in areas affected by desertification and drought in six Programme countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan)".*

As written in the Phase V appraisal report, the key issues in assessing the effectiveness during and after the programme will be the project success in:

- its contribution and its advocacy work to the international processes (CCD) to combat desertification and in addressing drylands, with a direct link to the stakeholder groups like poor and migrants that occupy the least fertile lands
- mobilising available resources for drylands development and improvement of livelihoods of local stakeholders;
- strengthening the local capacities at national and local level for sustainable drylands development;
- mainstreaming gender and empowering women as one key programme stakeholder group in the drylands; and
- contributing building resilience of drylands communities to climate change.

The programme reporting focuses on analysing the targets under each result. At the same time the reporting produces information on the above list. The findings on the basis of the reporting and the interviews indicate that the programme effectiveness has been at a good level. It has successfully contributed to the international processes and events (CCD; COP; CRIC; UNDDD) to combat desertification and addressing the poor areas in drylands, and working on building resilience of drylands communities through livelihoods development. The amount of resources mobilised has been remarkable and the feedback on Programme's work on building of local capacities has been positive. Also, the support to women's empowerment in the drylands has been effective. The Programme has supported in total 16 different project initiatives during the Phase V, two in both Jordan and Algeria, and three in each of the other participating countries, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. In addition, in Jordan the Programme has given catalytic support to mobilize partners and resources for national priorities while it doesn't have a role in the implementation.

2.4 Impact

The impact refers the overall effects of the Programme and is assessed on how the purpose contributes to the overall objectives. The focus is on long-term changes caused by the Programme.

The programme objective is aligned with those of the CCD strategic plan, improving the living conditions of affected populations (Strategic Objective 1); improving the conditions of affected ecosystems (Strategic Objective 2); and

mobilising partners and resources for drylands development (Strategic Objective 4); The overall performance indicators are defined in the programme document and specific indicators will be defined for each project separately.

The overall performance indicators of the Programme are as follows: a) Mobilization of partners and resources for drylands development; b) Improvement in living conditions of affected populations; c) Improvement in management of natural resources; d) Enhancement of conditions and role of women in local development; and e) Provision of support to CCD processes and knowledge/experience exchange.

On the basis of material produced by the Programme, the following impacts have been produced on different levels.

1. **Catalytic impact** (Indicator: a) *Mobilization of partners and resources for drylands development*)

The Programme is designed to be catalytic and it has worked successfully on mobilising funding and resources for Drylands Development. According to Programme reports approximately 13,8 million USD has been mobilised so far during this phase and another 10 million USD are now in the pipeline. The resources are primarily from national budgets, contributions from affected communities, GEF, UNDP, Coca-Cola Foundation and the Government of Japan (See the Annex 5. Synthesis of programme impacts).

2. **Promotion of the empowerment of drylands women** (at the policy level, mainly within UNCCD processes; Indicators: e) *Provision of support to CCD processes and knowledge/experience exchange*; d) *Enhancement of conditions and role of women in local development*)

- The Programme supported the organization of the first "Gender and Drylands Policy Forum" at UNCCD/COP 11 (Namibia, September 2013). The event led to the inclusion of "Women's Empowerment" as a one of the 6 priority action areas of the "Namib Declaration" issued by the COP and to the launch of the Windhoek Initiative on the "Empowerment of Drylands Women".
- The Programme supported the organization of the second "Gender Policy Forum" on the occasion of UNCCD/COP12, and its outcomes were reflected in the Ankara Ministerial Declaration (COP12/L.9) in which ministers committed to promote gender equality and the role of women as actors of change in addressing Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought.
- The Programme prepared a series of policy papers on the "Empowerment of Drylands Women" to inform discussions; these included: "[Gender and Drylands Governance: Empowering women for change](#)", "[Strengthening Drylands Women's Land Rights: Local contexts, Global change](#)" and "[Achieving Dryland Women's Empowerment: Environmental Resilience and Social Transformation Imperatives](#)". These have been widely disseminated by the UNCCD Secretariat (Climate Summit in Paris at the UNCCD booth in December 2015; Launch of the SDG Action

Campaign in Bonn by the UN and the German Government in May 2016; and the Expert meeting organized by the UNCCD in collaboration with FAO to finalize the LDN (SDG target 15.3) indicator framework in Washington in February 2016).

- A training module on the implementation of Gender Policy for the UNCCD is being developed to facilitate gender mainstreaming at the national level; this module will be available for COP13, in June 2017.
- According to an interview, the Programme work on women's empowerment has produced permanent impacts in at least one participating country - women's empowerment is considered to be a standard practice now in project planning and implementation in Morocco, as a result of the work of the Programme. Also, according to the interviews the Programme work on gender and women's empowerment has clearly influenced the ways of working and caused changes in behaviours and attitudes in participating countries.

3. Impact at partner countries (Indicators: *a) Mobilization of partners and resources for drylands development; b) Improvement in living conditions of affected populations; c) Improvement in management of natural resources; d) Enhancement of conditions and role of women in local development; and e) Provision of support to CCD processes and knowledge/experience exchange*)

The Annex 5 (Synthesis of programme impact) lists the action by the Programme, the produced impacts and the related performance indicators. The programme operates at three levels, as mentioned earlier. The intended positive impacts on target groups are evident: the governments' improved capacities and policies on drylands; strengthened capacities of programme partners and local stakeholder groups, their improved livelihoods and enhanced resilience, and empowered dryland women. No negative impacts on the target groups and other related parties were identified.

The Programme has contributed significantly to the UNCCD processes (COPs, other events). The lessons learnt from Northern Africa and Middle East countries have been brought to the rest of the continent and the dryland areas in general. The Programme provided technical and financial support to the elaboration of the "Action Plan for Coordinated Action in the Drylands", presented and acknowledged by the COP 11, inviting Parties to support its implementation. The Programme contributes to the development of the Global Land Outlook (GLO), a policy initiative led by the UNCCD Secretariat to determine the future course of land policies and land management across the globe. The Programme provided a practice case study on scaling-up SLM in Morocco through POS; and it will also peer review the GLO report. The GLO will be launched in June 2017 on the World Day to Combat Desertification.

In partnership with the UNCCD, the Programme supports its partner countries in meeting "SDG 15: Life on Land", particularly SDG Target 15.3 on "combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and striving to achieve

a land degradation-neutral world.” This partnership aims to support countries’ preparedness to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) or SDG Target 15.3 by 2030.

2.5 The intervention strategy

The Programme Phase V is an extension of the previous phase and builds on the achievements of the Programme previous phases. The Programme has continued its support to its partners while accommodating emerging development priorities (see chapter 2.1.1) and the previous evaluation report recommendations (for example Aligning Programme objectives with those of the CCD 10-Year Strategic Plan; Giving increased attention to improving the productivity of affected ecosystems; Strengthening the Programme in its role as a platform for South-South Cooperation; and Scaling-up Programme efforts towards gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment).

Taking into account the results produced by the Programme and the interview results, the decision to focus on above mentioned areas has been successful. Combatting desertification and developing drylands, and at the same time building resilience against the climate change, are some of the most important challenges in the Programme participating countries and for the people living in the drylands in particular. Those challenges have been combatted by the Programme through capacity building, information dissemination, raising awareness, contributing to related policies, giving technical support to project preparation, and search of financing for dryland development. This strategy has proved to be effective and to produce good results. The interviewees considered the Programme support to have been valuable and crucial for the dryland development in the region, and all of them were pleased with the support that they have received from the programme. For example, the role of the programme was highly appreciated in documentation and publishing of the good practise to manage the drylands.

At the practical level, the key implementation strategy has been the close cooperation with the Programme partners in the participating countries, regionally and worldwide. This has enabled the Programme to produce its results and to achieve its objectives. In the long term it also allows the programme results to continue through the partners, in spite of the actual Programme stopping after the Phase V.

2.6 The sustainability of the programme

The key issue regarding the sustainability of a project/programme is *the institutionalization of results and impacts*, that is building the national ownership and partner mobilization; *scaling-up and replication of good practices* (with link to resource (funds) mobilisation), and the *documentation of the good practices and lessons learned*, with dissemination of the produced material. The Programme has aimed towards the sustainability with the strategy of securing the strong national ownership of the interventions, aiming to mobilise funding and resources

for implementation mainly with national resources. The programme strategy to strengthen the capacity of national partners in project design and implementation has worked towards this end too, as well as the documentation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learnt (for example the preparation of a publication on good practices within "Programme Oasis Sud" (POS)). In some of the national projects, like Cluster des Oasis du Sahara, and COS Social Business, the design has taken into account structures that work towards sustainable targets.

On the basis of the long implementation period of the Programme (since 2001), the Programme Phase V design was inclusive, and the national actors participated in the planning process. This enhanced the sustainability, by ensuring a direct response to nationally-identified needs.

The programme has given capacity building during the implementation. However, some interviewees were pleased to inform that the capacity building activities have been taken over by national actors already, which is naturally positive for sustainability. Some interviewees considered that the Programme had caused positive structural changes in the concerned ministry, which had internalised the institutionalised monitoring and evaluation system, and strengthened communication systems.

The Programme interventions are implemented within the framework of larger national initiatives which provide an enabling framework for their scaling-up and replication at national level (for example the POS, Morocco and Rural Renewal Program in Algeria) with significant resources and coverage to ensure scaling-up and replication. The regional nature of the Programme and its work for knowledge management allows for the sharing of experience among Programme countries and the development community at large, via UNCCD fora.

A key question regarding sustainability is whether the positive effects of the Programme are likely to continue after the external support is ended. To continue, a development intervention always needs to have prospects to institutionalise its work within permanent local organisations or institutions, or a similar entity. The work of the Programme has contributed strongly to this target and there is clear evidence that the national level work will continue and that the capacity building efforts and the advocacy and promotion work towards sustainability. By working closely with national authorities, supporting their work, the programme has built strong ownership at participating countries. This is further enhanced by working in various levels (at policy level and regional, national and local levels). The crucial issue is that the drylands related actions in and by each country are continued. In most of the projects (for example POS in Morocco; Kasserine in Tunisia) supported by the Programme, the situation regarding the continuation of the activities seems to be good. On the other hand, the Syrian project has received inputs from the programme (e.g. seeds for planting), but continuation is uncertain.

The programme works in close coordination with many partners and stakeholders (UNDP offices, national ministries, local organisations, embassies), which helps the sustainability prospects. During Phase V more emphasis has been placed on creating links between dryland management,

livelihoods development and entrepreneurship. Also, the links and cooperation between the participating countries has been strengthened.

Awareness raising regarding the importance of drylands management has been one of the key activities of the programme since the start of the programme. Also, the contribution of dryland management related policies has been an integral part of the programme. The Programme has influenced both the related policies of the participating countries and the policies of UNDP, through the active support to and information dissemination towards the national actors and the UNDP. This applies both to the dryland management and development, and to the related gender mainstreaming.

The catalytic nature of the programme is one of the key issues to the sustainability. As discussed in the previous chapters the programme has been successful in mobilising funds and resources to development interventions for CCD, thus securing the continuation of the Programme work.

The support to the documentation of the good practices and lessons learned, with dissemination of the materials, and the South-South cooperation that strengthens the exchange of experiences between the countries and actors, have worked both towards the sustainability of the Programme results.

3. Exit strategy

The Programme has been implemented since 2001, and as any project, after a long implementation period, it is coming to an end. During the exit period any programme aims at securing the handing over of sustainable activities and results to its partners in order to ensure the Programme's longer term impact on the stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The short remaining time and the reducing resources for implementation result in the situation where hardly any additional activities and tasks can be done, beyond the remaining work plan activities. The programme has only half a year's time to secure the completion of the handing over processes. This puts a lot of pressure on the programme team, especially as one team member will end her work already in the end of March due to budgetary reasons. There are still some important activities in progress, so the Programme needs to finalise them, as follows:

- Technical support to the national entities to finalise the necessary document preparation for the next GEF cycle in Tunisia
- Finalising a training module on the implementation of a Gender Policy for UNCCD, to be presented in COP 13 in June 2017
- Peer review of the GLO report to be published in July 2017
- Preparation of the Programme final report with the emphasis of learning from successes of the Programme. It will be important to systematically capture the concrete lessons learnt and good practices, and share them. The Programme could prepare the final report in a form that can be distributed to a wider public, instead of preparing the traditional final reporting format that is distributed to only the closest programme

stakeholders. Briefs on specific topics would also make the achievements more accessible.

- Establishment of voluntary LDN targets for Lebanon with the local partners, submitting these targets to UNCCD/COP13

Another important topic for the Programme during the exit period is how to respond to the situation in Syria. Taking into account the Syria crisis, the programme should, as much as possible to continue capacity building efforts, according to the resources available for emerging needs.

Although the programme is about to end, the good experiences in promoting catalytic drylands development to combat desertification form a good model for replication of a similar development programme(s). There is also a need to scale up many of the development efforts that the Programme has supported, especially taking into account the Syria crisis that affects not only Syria but also the neighbouring countries.

The cooperation between UNDP and Finland in the context of the programme has been long standing, thus one should consider possibilities for the future cooperation. One possible way forward to continue the cooperation within the region and the relevant sectors, taking into account the most severe emerging crisis in the region, the Syrian war (with implications also to Finland and the rest of Europe), could be building cooperation on the basis of the concept note "Catalytic resilience-based response to the Syria Crisis" that the Programme has prepared already.

Annex 1. TOR

Terms of Reference

International Consultant for the final review of the Programme

“Catalytic Support to Implement the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa - Phase V”

September 2016

Location:	Home based with a mission to Lebanon
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Post Level:	International Consultant
Languages Required:	English; French an asset
Duration of Initial Contract:	14 days
Expected Duration of Assignment:	1 November 2016-31 December 2016

1. Background

The Programme of Catalytic Support to implement the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa is the Arab States component of IDDP. It was launched in January 2001 to advance UNCCD implementation in West Asia and North Africa. An integrated approach to drylands development was adopted, stressing poverty-environment linkages and focusing on enhancing the conditions of affected livelihoods and ecosystems. To date, Programme performance has been assessed by four independent evaluations, the latest of which in June 2011. Overall, these evaluations noted the effectiveness of the Programme in terms of its contribution to drylands development and UNCCD implementation in partner countries; it also highlighted its efficiency in making catalytic use of official development assistance to mobilize development resources and advance sustainability in the drylands.

The Programme is implemented by the UNDP [Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification \(GC-RED\)](#), former Drylands Development Centre), within the framework of its Integrated Drylands Development Programme, a global initiative designed to advance sustainable development in drylands. It is based in Beirut, Lebanon, and funded by the Government of Finland with contributions from UNDP and partner countries. It currently serves six countries namely Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

Phase V of the Programme started in January 2013 for a 4-year period and a Finnish contribution of €3.0 million. The preparatory work for the design of this phase was intensive. An independent review commissioned by the Government of Finland and UNDP was carried out in June 2011 to assess the performance of the Programme, its development impacts (until end of Phase IV) and to determine the relevance of continuing Finnish support beyond 2012. The evaluation concluded to the strong performance of the Programme and recommended its extension. Based on the results of this evaluation and consultations with partner countries, a proposal for this new programme Phase was developed and approved by the Government of Finland.

An inception period was then agreed with the Government of Finland covering 3-month between 1 January and 31 March 2013. Its objective was to further develop the results framework of the Programme, based on extensive consultations with partners, to better guide the design of interventions and the reporting on results. As such, a "Results Monitoring Framework" (RMF) was developed, clearly defining indicators, baselines and targets to be achieved under each result by the end of the Programme phase.

An appraisal mission was also commissioned by the Government of Finland in March 2013 to assess programme design, the results framework, work plan and budget. The appraisal mission concluded to the relevance of the proposed interventions and to the logic and feasibility of Programme design, objectives, results and activities as defined in the inception report. The budget and timeframe were judged realistic and improvements were proposed to the RMF which was then amended accordingly. It was agreed that the RMF will constitute the basis for reporting on results and achievements.

The overall objective of the Programme during phase V is "To support the implementation of the UNCCD in West Asia and North Africa, specifically its 10-Year Strategic Plan, with focus on improving the living conditions of affected populations (Strategic Objective 1), improving the conditions of affected ecosystems (Strategic Objective 2), and mobilizing partners and resources for drylands development (Strategic Objective 4)". The main lines of action are: 1) Mainstreaming drylands development issues into planning and budgeting frameworks; 2) Enhancing livelihoods and building resilience of drylands communities; 3) Improving the management of natural resources; 4) Promoting gender equity and empowerment of dryland women; and 5) Facilitation of knowledge sharing and South-South Cooperation.

The initial end date of the Programme was 31 December 2016; a no-cost extension was granted till June 2017 to wrap-up pending activities and enhance the sustainability of Programme achievements.

2. Review objectives

The objectives of this independent review, jointly commissioned by the Government of Finland and UNDP, are as follows:

- To assess the performance, especially in relation to sustainability of the Programme based on the review of relevant documentation and discussions with Programme team and partners;
- To support finalizing the Exit Strategy of the Programme in order to enhance the sustainability of its achievements.

3. Scope of work

3.1 Programme performance and sustainability

The contribution of the Programme towards the promotion of drylands development and UNCCD implementation in partner countries will be examined in terms of mainstreaming drylands priorities in development frameworks, management of natural resources, enhancing livelihoods as well as the catalytic role of the Programme in mobilizing partners and resources.

The independent review will assess:

The **relevance** of the Programme with respect to the national priorities of its partner countries, Finnish Development Cooperation Policy and emerging regional priorities.

Its **efficiency** in terms of the cost effectiveness of converting means into results. The following questions can be used to guide the assessment: Does the quantity/quality of the results justify the quantity/quality of the means and resources used for achieving them? Have time and resources been allocated in a planned, balanced and justified manner? To what extent have activities been implemented in a timely manner? To what extent activities were implemented in accordance with the Results Monitoring Framework and agreed annual workplans - Have the possible deviations been justified?

Its **effectiveness and impact**, i.e. extent of progress towards the achievement of intended results/outputs. The following questions can be used to guide the assessment: What is the extent of the catalytic effect of Finland's contribution? To what extent has the Programme achieved its objectives? Are the quality and quantity of the produced results and outputs in accordance with the plans, how the results/outputs are applied by the beneficiaries and other intended stakeholders? Which factors have facilitated or impeded the progress of the programme? Are possible problems in implementation adequately addressed? Are the various beneficiaries satisfied with the Programme progress and achievements? Are the results/outputs making a contribution towards reducing poverty, enhancing livelihoods and natural resource management and promoting gender equality and women empowerment?

Its **intervention strategy** in terms of its implementation arrangements, network of partners including UNDP Country Offices, its flexibility/responsiveness in adjusting to emerging regional priorities particularly in response to the Syria Crisis and its repercussions.

The sustainability of results and benefits in terms of national ownership and capacity building as well as documentation and dissemination of good practices and learned.

3.2 Exit Strategy

The mission will help finalize the exit strategy for the Programme in order to enhance the sustainability of Programme achievements in terms of driving drylands development processes and improving livelihoods and natural resource management in partner countries. *It is to be noted that the sustainability of Programme achievements is inherent to the design of this current phase. The following elements form the basis of the exit strategy developed by the Programme Team at the onset of the current Phase and currently being implemented:*

1. Promotion of national ownership in terms of mainstreaming drylands development priorities into national planning and budgeting frameworks.
2. Building capacity in partner countries in terms of technical support to the design and implementation of projects/programs to enhance livelihoods and natural resource management, as well as mobilizing partners and resources for drylands development.
3. Documentation of good practices and lessons learned from Programme implementation and sharing them with partner countries.
4. Contribution to policy-making processes within UNCCD particularly regarding the "Empowerment of Drylands Women".

Action along these elements is on-going since the beginning of this current Phase with increased focus on the documentation and sharing of good practices and lessons learned as of 2015. The mission will assess the efforts invested and results to date along these elements and advise on the way forward. Additionally, the mission will outline the elements of the exit strategy that still need to be developed or complemented during the no-cost extension in January-June 2017, particularly with regard to the transfer of Programme knowledge to its institutional home, the Global Policy Centre for Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification in Nairobi, Kenya.

Moreover, the mission will explore a possible way forward for the long-standing UNDP/Finland partnership developed over the past 16 years within the framework of this Programme. In doing so, the mission will take into account UNDP and Finnish development priorities as well as financial realities.

4. Methodology

The review will be carried out by an International Consultant who will conduct the following tasks:

1. A desk review of relevant documents (a preliminary list is provided below);
2. Debriefing at the MFA in Helsinki;
3. Working with the Programme Team in Beirut on review issues
4. Skype consultations with Programme partners organized from Beirut;
5. Debriefing with the Programme Team;
6. Debriefing at the MFA in Helsinki;
7. Preparation and submission of the review report with input from the Programme Team.

The relevant documentation to be reviewed by the consultant include among others:

- Mid-Term Review report - June 2011
- Programme/Phase V Proposal - December 2012
- Programme Appraisal report - March 2013
- Inception report/Results Monitoring Framework - May 2013
- *All Progress Reports:*
 - First progress report, Jan 2014
 - Second progress report, July 2014
 - Third progress report, Jan 2015
 - Fourth progress report, July 2015
 - Fifth progress report, Jan 2016
 - Sixth progress report, August 2016
- *Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings:*
 - Tunis, Tunisia, April 2013
 - Amman, Jordan, February 2014

- Tighmert, Morocco, March 2015
- *Project documents and workplans for Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia*
- *Good practice and lessons learned publications for "Programme oasis Sud" (Morocco) and Kasserine Project (Tunisia)*
- *Policy papers on the " Empowerment of Drylands women" (land rights, governance and resilience)*
- Programme website at www.ddc-as.org

5. Duration and implementation modalities of the Assignment

The consultancy is envisioned to be completed in 14 working days (including travel days) spread over the period of one month in November 2016 follows:

- Review of relevant documents and meetings in Helsinki: 2.5 days
- Mission to Beirut to: 6 days including travel
 - Work with Programme Team
 - Field visit to showcase activities in Lebanon
 - Skype discussions with Programme partners
 - Skype discussion with the Director of UNDP/GPC-RED
- Write-up of review report/exit strategy: 5 days
- Debriefing at the MFA: 0.5 day

The assignment will be bound by the terms and conditions of UNDP Procurement rules and guidelines. S/He will be briefed on the detailed schedule of the tasks at the beginning of the assignment.

6.Expected Outputs and Deliverables

Payment will be made in two instalments based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR, as follows:

- 60% upon the satisfactory completion of the mission to Lebanon and submission of an annotated outline of the review report.
- 40% upon the satisfactory completion/submission of review report.

Deliverables shall be submitted in Word format and in compliance with the UNDP standards and requirements. The detailed outline of these documents shall be agreed upon the commencement of the assignment. The draft review report shall be submitted to UNDP and MFA for feedback before its finalization.

7.Competencies

Corporate

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP.
- Treats all people fairly without favouritism.

Technical/Professionalism

- Demonstrates ability to think logically, organizational skills, attention to detail, ability to work with quickly and accurately while under pressure and within short deadlines.
- Able to work independently and remotely with minimal supervision.
- Capable to plan, prioritize and deliver tasks on time.

Communications

- Demonstrates strong research and excellent writing skills in English;
- Demonstrates strong interpersonal skills, able to communicate and work with diverse people at different levels such as Headquarters, Regional Bureaux, Country Offices, etc.
- Focuses on impact and result and responds positively to critical feedback.

8.Required Skills and Experience

The review will be carried out by a development professional, who is independent from the UNDP and the Programme. The Consultant should have the following qualifications, skills and knowledge:

Education:

Master's degree or equivalent in development studies, natural resource management, environmental science or other closely related field (max. 5 points).

Experience:

- Minimum 10 (ten) years of post-Master's working experience with developing countries in one or more of the following relevant technical areas: sustainable development in drylands, UNCCD implementation, poverty alleviation and natural resource management (max. 15 points).
- A solid track record in the design and evaluation of multi-sectoral programmes and projects and developing programme/project documents at different scales, preferably in drylands and/or other fragile ecosystems, (max. 15 points).
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to UNCCD implementation and integrated drylands development (max. 10 points).
- Prior working experience with UNDP and knowledge of Finnish development cooperation is a strong advantage (max. 10 points).
- Working experience in the Arab Region (max.10 points).

Languages:

- Excellent verbal communication and writing skills in English; knowledge of French is desired (max. 5 points)

9.Evaluation

- Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated;
- Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the technical criteria will be weighted at 70% and the financial offer will be weighted at 30%;

- The technical criteria (education, experience, languages) will be based on a maximum 70 points. Applicants obtaining 49 points or more of the total technical points will be considered for financial evaluation;
- Financial score (max 30 points) shall be computed as a ratio of the proposal being evaluated and the lowest priced proposal of those technically qualified;
- Applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score and has accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

10. Application Procedures

The application should contain:

- **CV** using Personal History Form (P11), indicating all relevant past experiences and the contact details of at least three (3) professional referees (Blank P11 form can be downloaded from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc);
- **A brief cover write-up** explaining why you are the most suitable for the advertised position and describing a methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment (based on commenting on the requirements indicated in this TOR). Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application.; and
- **Financial proposal** describing the lump sum amount (working days and any other possible costs) for the tasks specified in this announcement, exclusive of travel costs and per diems. All travel expenses related to mission travels will be supported by the project travel fund and will be reimbursed as per UNDP rules and regulations for the consultant. Costs for mission airfares, terminal expenses, and living allowances should not be included in financial proposal. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount.

Annex 2. List of major documents reviewed

Programme of Catalytic Support to Implement the Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa – Phase V - Annex II - Proposal

UNDDC Programme Appraisal report, March 2013

Updated Final MTR of Catalytic CCD Support, Final Report with annexes

Programme reports, phase V:

- Programme Inception Report (May 2013)
- First progress Report - Jan 2014
- Drylands Programme - Second Progress Report - July 2014
- Drylands Programme - Third Progress Report - January 2015
- Drylands Programme - Fourth Progress Report - July 2015
- Drylands Programme - Fifth Progress Report - 26 January 2016
- Drylands Programme - Sixth Progress Report 22 August 2016

AC meeting minutes:

- Minutes - 11th Advisory Committee Meeting Tunisia April 2013
- Minutes - 12th Advisory Committee Meeting
- Minutes - 13th Advisory Committee Meeting
- Minutes (English summary) - 2015 ACM

Publication "Empowering Women for Change"

- Thematic Paper 1: Strengthening Dryland Women's Land Rights: Local Contexts, Global Change
- Thematic Paper 2: Gender and Drylands Governance
- Thematic Paper 3: Achieving Dryland Women's Empowerment: Environmental Resilience and Social Transformation Imperatives
- Synthesis of Thematic Papers: Empowering Dryland Women: Capturing opportunities in land Rights, Governance and Resilience

Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods, Reducing Vulnerability and Building Resilience in the Drylands

Lessons from the UNDP Integrated Drylands Development Programme

Programme Oasis Sud Publication: Bonnes Pratiques

Mise en oeuvre du « Plan d'Action Régional pour la Lutte Contre la Désertification » (PARLCD) dans la zone d'El Brek (Kasserine) 2008-2014, Avril 2015

A Resilience-based Response to the Syria Crisis; Concept Note for a Catalytic Programme. November 2016. United Nations Development Programme, Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification.

Annex 3. List of stakeholders interviewed

Tuesday 8 November

- Vesa Kaarakka, Forestry Advisor, MFA of Finland

Thursday 10 November

- Suvi Sipilä, MFA of Finland

Monday 14 November

- Programme team: Elie Kodsi, Mona Haidar, Hala Attieh (discussions each day of the visit)
- UNDP Lebanon and “Lebanon Host Communities Support Project” (LHCSP) Team: Raghed Assi, Director, LHCSP; Leon Chammah, Livelihoods Specialist, LHCSP; Jiihad Jradi, Socioeconomic Officer, South Lebanon, LHCSP

Tuesday 15 November

- Dr. Rola Arouni, Head of Agriculture Department, “Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Sidon and the South” (Programme partner);
- Meeting with Hussein Nasrallah (UNCCD Focal point until Dec 2015 and LHCSP Coordinator in the South);
- Visit to 2 cooperatives supported by the Programme in Southern Lebanon

Wednesday 16 November

- Skype meeting with UNDP Jordan (Nedal Alouran and Rana Saleh - Environment Team; Mais Abdallat - Gender Focal Point)
- Skype meeting with Majed Hasanat, Manager - Sustainable Tourism Project
- Phone meeting with Wagaki Wischniewski, Programme Focal Point at UNCCD Secretariat
- Phone meeting with Mohammad Houmymid, Manager Programme Oasis Sud, Agence du Sud, Morocco
- Skype meeting with Zohra Boaita, ex-coordinator PRCHAT/Ministry of Agriculture; Rym Merabet, her assistant; Algeria

Thursday 16 November

- Skype meeting with Ms. Akiko Suzuki, Deputy Country Director, UNDP Syria, and local team
- Skype meeting with GC-RED Director, Ms. Anne Juepner;

Monday 21 November

- Skype meeting with Jihene Touil, Programme Focal Point, UNDP Tunisia; Hamda Alaoui: UNCCD Focal Point, Ministry of Environment (Overall support to Tunisia, Kasserine, Water Governance, GEF 6 SLM)

Annex 4. Synthesis of the Programme initiatives and their impact

Country Project/Initiative	Programme financial contribution	Partners and resources mobilized	Direct beneficiaries	Indirect beneficiaries
Algeria				
<i>Capacity Building at MADR (PRCHAT, M&E)</i>	\$75,000	\$350,000 (Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development - MADR)	68 technical and managerial MADR staff at the national, regional and local levels trained on M&E M&E Unit established at the MADR M&E processes institutionalized and integrated in the 5-Year Development Plan for the sector (2015-2019)	Poor rural communities in Algeria (approx. 4.0 million people) benefit from transparent and better targeted interventions within the framework of the Rural Renewal Program (estimated annual budget of \$100 million)
<i>Integrated local development project (PPDRI), Magroune</i>	\$130,000	\$250,000 (MADR)	161 beneficiaries (60% women) with better access to electricity and water via solar power	PPDRI in Magroune designed as a model for about 10,000 planned local development projects in rural Algeria, enhancing the livelihoods of about 4.0 million inhabitants and promoting sustainable land management over approx. 8.2 million hectares

Jordan <i>Integration of sustainability considerations in the tourism sector</i> <i>Support to gender mainstreaming in UNDP and national development frameworks</i> <i>Catalytic support to mobilize partners and resources for national priorities (no role in implementation)</i> ✓ <i>Mainstreaming Rio Conventions into Sectoral Policies</i> ✓ <i>Development of national strategy for spatial planning project</i> ✓ <i>Renewable energy project</i>	\$100,000	\$2.7 million (GEF)	Affected communities in Petra, Dibeen and Wadi Rum through the elaboration of sustainable land use and management plans for the protected areas	The Government, people and fragile ecosystems of Jordan through better integration of sustainability considerations into the tourism sector, critical for the country's economy
	\$30,000		Identification of priority areas of intervention for gender mainstreaming in Jordan and the elaboration of a Gender Strategy	Women and affected communities in Jordan who benefit from enhanced participation and targeting of women in development planning and interventions
	\$15,000 for proposal development	\$996,000 (GEF)		
	\$10,000 for proposal development	\$2.0 million (GEF)		
	\$10,000 for proposal development	\$3.2 million (GEF); \$18 million from Government		

✓ <i>Mitigating the adverse impacts of Syrian crisis on ecosystem services and land degradation</i>	\$10,000 for proposal development	Proposal developed for \$4.0 million (Resource mobilization underway)		
Lebanon				
<i>Host Communities Support Project (LHCSP)- Women agro-food cooperatives</i>	\$200,000	\$300,000 from UNDP-Lebanon, variety of donors within the LHCSP and beneficiary cooperatives who contributed up to 25% of cost of supported interventions Catalytic effect: women cooperatives received additional donor support of about \$500,000 (Norway, Italy, DFID)	1,650 beneficiaries, (33 cooperatives, 10 women per cooperative, 5 members per family)	Host communities and Syrian refugees in 33 villages have better access to quality agro-food products at affordable prices
<i>National Initiative for Women Empowerment – Vocational Training with Ministry of Social Affairs</i>	\$50,000	\$50,000 (European Union)	Assessment of vocational training needs for 5 Social Service Centres; training of youth and women in districts of Saida and Borj Hammoud (100 participants, 500 beneficiaries)	MoSA Service Centres have better understanding of vocational training needs based on market demands in poverty affected areas
<i>Promotion of solar energy use in agriculture</i>	\$50,000	\$50,000 in-kind contribution by Municipality of	360 people (60 families, 6 persons/family) benefitting	Promotion of solar energy use in agriculture in Hermel, a poor

		Hermel (drip irrigation network and fruit trees)	from better access to water for irrigation 300 km ² of land sustainably managed for fruit tree production (15,000 trees)	rural district in Northern Lebanon affected by poverty and drought, energy shortage and influx of Syrian refugees.
Morocco				
<i>Programme Oasis Sud (POS)</i>				
<i>Livelihoods and NRM interventions</i>	\$250,000	\$620,000 (Agence du Sud)	Mainly in the rural Commune of Asrir – 3,750 people, 1954 women, 1761 men who benefited from livelihoods diversification, improved land and water management, and supply chain development for local products	
<i>Network of local elected women</i>	\$50,000	\$100,000 (Agence du Sud)	20 elected women in Southern Morocco who are better trained and equipped to engage local decision making	Women and affected communities in Southern Morocco with better integration of women's perceptions and needs in decision-making processes
<i>South-South Cooperation mission</i>	\$50,000	\$50,000	60 national and international participants sharing lessons learned and good practices in drylands development	Affected communities and ecosystems in Morocco through scaling-up and replication of POS good practices. Affected communities and ecosystems in Programme countries who benefited from experience exchange and networking
Syria				

Emergency Assistance for the Restoration and Stabilization of Livelihoods of People Affected by the Crisis in Syria Dar Al-Salam Food Processing Initiative Badira Initiative for the Empowerment of Small Farmers	\$100,000	\$100,000 (UNDP-Syria)	775 people, mainly women, who benefited from employment income in the dairy farm	2,500 persons through increased availability of dairy products on the local market at reasonable prices
	\$125,000	\$175,000 (UNDP-Syria)	3,500 persons who benefited from inputs for agricultural production; 4,000 seasonal workdays mostly for women	4,000 persons through increased availability of fresh vegetables on the local market at reasonable prices
Tunisia Kasserine	\$100,000	\$300,000 (Government of Tunisia)	<p>372 people (50% women) have better access to water and their livelihoods enhanced through the establishment of lamb fattening units</p> <p>67 ha of land planted with olive trees (10,000 trees)</p> <p>3 schools (439 students, of which 237 girls) have water reservoirs to irrigate their gardens</p>	Kasserine, a marginal area of Tunisia's interior affected by desertification and drought, now better targeted by government & donor funded interventions; e.g. Kasserine served by project "Decentralized governance of drinking water" to make drinking water to local populations

<i>Decentralized Governance of Drinking Water in Rural Areas</i>	\$150,000	\$2.4 million from Government of Tunisia, Coca-Cola Foundation and Government of Japan	18,292 people, 50% women, have better access to drinking water; 12 drinking water networks rehabilitated. Women better represented in water users' groups	Communities in rural Tunisia benefitting from the good practices and approaches implemented within the framework of the project
<i>Addressing Multiple Threats to Ecosystems and Livelihoods in the Alfa belt of Tunisia</i>	\$100,000	\$6.54 million from GEF-6 Star allocation for Tunisia; currently in the pipeline with expected approval in early 2017		
Global/UNCCD				
<i>Promotion of the empowerment of drylands women</i>	\$50,000	\$200,000 from UNDP Global Programme and UNCCD	About 300 participants in the gender days at UNCCD COP11 in Namibia and COP12 in Turkey	Women and Country Parties to the Convention through better mainstreaming of gender considerations in UNCCD implementation
<i>Global Land Outlook</i>	Only staff time/technical contribution		Policy makers in Country Parties to the Convention are better informed on the status and trends in the use and management of land resources	
<i>Land Degradation Neutrality</i>	Only staff time/technical contribution		Partner countries supported for the implementation of SDG target 15.3 on LDN, through capacity building and technical advice	

Annex 5. Synthesis of the Programme impacts

"Programme of Catalytic Support to Implement the Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa - Phase V" ***Synthesis of the Programme impacts***

I. Catalytic Impact: Mobilization of partners and resources for Drylands Development in partner countries.

About \$13.8 million were mobilized during this Programme phase; another 10 million are currently in the pipeline (please refer to the column "Partners and Resources Mobilized" in the attached synthesis table). The mobilized resources are primarily from national budgets, contributions from affected communities, GEF, UNDP, Coca-Cola Foundation and the Government of Japan.

II. Policy impacts (mainly within UNCCD processes)

II.1 Promotion of the empowerment of drylands women

- The Programme supported the organization of the first "Gender and Drylands Policy Forum" at UNCCD/COP 11 (Namibia, September 2013). The event led to the inclusion of "Women Empowerment" as a one of the 6 priority action areas of the "Namib Declaration" issued by the COP and to the launch of the Windhoek Initiative on the "Empowerment of Drylands Women"
- The Programme supported the organization of the second "Gender policy Forum" on the occasion of UNCCD/COP12; its outcomes were reflected in the Ankara Ministerial Declaration (COP12/L.9) in which ministers committed to "dedicate ourselves to promoting gender equality and the role of women as actors of change in addressing Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought."
- The Programme prepared a series of policy papers on the "Empowerment of Drylands Women" to inform discussions; these included: ["Gender and Drylands Governance: Empowering women for change"](#), ["Strengthening Drylands Women's Land Rights: Local contexts, Global change"](#) and ["Achieving Dryland Women's Empowerment: Environmental Resilience and Social Transformation Imperatives"](#). These were appreciated and widely disseminated by the UNCCD Secretariat including at the: i) Climate Summit in Paris at the UNCCD booth in December 2015; ii) Launch of the SDG Action Campaign in Bonn by the UN and the German Government in May 2016; iii) Expert meeting organized by the UNCCD in collaboration with FAO to finalize the LDN (SDG target 15.3) indicator framework in Washington in February 2016.
- More recently, the UNCCD Secretariat solicited Programme support to develop a Gender Policy for the UNCCD. A training module on the implementation of this policy will also be developed to facilitate gender mainstreaming at the national level; this module will be available for COP13.

II.2 Contribution to the elaboration of the "Action Plan for Coordinated Action in the Drylands"

The report "Global Drylands: A UN System-wide Response," was prepared by 18 UN agencies following calls by governments for a UN system-wide response to land challenges. The report's key messages are that drylands offer opportunities for local populations and

provide regional and global benefits, and that the UN is uniquely positioned to promote investments in drylands. COP 10 took note of the proposed coordinated UN action in the drylands, and called upon the UNCCD Secretariat to develop a concrete action plan for the way forward. Following a request for support from the Secretariat, the Programme provided technical and financial support for the elaboration of the “Action Plan for Coordinated Action in the Drylands” which was presented at a side-event in Windhoek on 19 September 2013, and acknowledged by the COP, inviting Parties to support its implementation.

II.3 Global Land Outlook

- The Programme is contributing to the development of the Global Land Outlook (GLO), an ambitious policy initiative led by the UNCCD Secretariat to determine the future course of land policies and land management across the globe. GLO consists of a comprehensive report on the status and trends in the use and management of land resources to better inform policy and practice for scaling-up sustainable land management and restoration efforts.
- The Programme provided a good practice case study on scaling-up SLM in Morocco through Programme Oasis Sud; it will also peer review the GLO report.
- The first draft of the GLO is expected in December 2016; peer reviewing, editing and printing will be undertaken in January-May 2017 and the publication will be launched in June 2017 on World Day to Combat Desertification; Programme manager on the steering committee of the GLO

II.4 Land Degradation Neutrality

- In partnership with the UNCCD, the Programme is helping its partner countries in meeting “SDG 15: Life on Land”, particularly SDG Target 15.3 on “combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and striving to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.” This partnership aims to support countries’ preparedness to achieve LDN or SDG Target 15.3 by 2030.
- The Programme provided technical support to the regional capacity building workshops on LDN target setting for Africa and Asia, organized in May and July 2016 respectively. Five Programme countries submitted requests for technical assistance to the UNCCD and participated in these workshops. These include Morocco and Algeria for the Africa workshop and Lebanon, Syria and Jordan for the Asia workshop.
- In Lebanon, given the adoption of LDN as the guiding framework for UNCCD implementation till 2030, it was agreed with the Lebanese partners to adjust the on-going NAP alignment process - currently supported by the Programme - to focus on the establishment of voluntary LDN targets for Lebanon. This exercise will be completed during the no-cost extension period with the objective of submitting these targets to UNCCD/COP13 in the fall of 2017.

III. In partner countries

Lebanon

- Policy and technical support for the implementation of the “Lebanon Host Communities Support Project”. The Plan is a crucial channel through which the international community supports Lebanon to address the needs of both affected communities and refugees.

- Building resilient livelihoods for Host communities through the promotion of women agro-food cooperatives, a total of 33 cooperatives in Bekaa and South; average number of women per cooperative 10; 330 families or 1650 direct beneficiaries based on an average family size of 5 in Lebanon
- As an indirect benefit of Programme support, women cooperatives received greater international and national attention and resources (major contribution from Norway, Italy and UK totaling USD 500,000)
- Design & implementation of an integrated project to promote solar energy use in agriculture in Hermel, a poor district in Northern Lebanon affected by poverty and drought and the influx of Syrian refugees; supported the sustainable management of 300 km² of land with over 15,000 fruit trees (Pine, olives, almonds and hawthorn); enhanced livelihoods of 60 families, about 360 beneficiaries based on an average family size of 6 in Hermel

Jordan

- Integration of sustainability considerations in the tourism sector in Jordan, a significant impact considering the very fragile ecosystem in the country and its reliance on tourism. The Programme supported the design of the project, the mobilization of significant resources from GEF and national partners, as well as project implementation targeting specifically outputs 2.2 and 3.2 regarding the elaboration of sustainable land use and management plans for 3 protected areas: Petra, Dibeena and Wadi Rum
- Nomination of Petra as a protected area
- Designation of a dedicated picnic area in Dibeena and the mobilization of USD 1 million from the Royal Court for its implementation
- Support to the implementation of the [Jordan Response Plan to the Syria Crisis 2016-2018](#) (JRP 2016-18) through the elaboration of to the design of a joint UNDP/UNEP project to alleviate the pressure of Syrian refugees on the fragile ecosystems in Jordan and to build the resilience of host communities.

Syria

- Policy and technical support for the implementation of the UNDP initiative “Emergency Assistance for the Restoration and Stabilization of Livelihoods of People Affected by the Crisis in Syria”
- The “Dar Al-Salam Food Processing Initiative supported the establishment of a dairy farm, created employment for 155 persons (direct beneficiaries 775, based on an average family size of 5 people); indirect beneficiaries, about 500 families or 2,500 persons - Through increased availability of dairy products on the local market at reasonable prices.
- The “Badira Initiative for the Empowerment of Small Farmers” which made available fresh vegetables on the local market at reasonable prices; supported 700 small farmers (about 3500 persons), covered an area of 2240 ha and helped secure 4,000 seasonal work days mostly for women and provided 64 job opportunities for technical support and administrative staff.

Morocco

- Support to the design and implementation of new phase of Programme Oasis Sud, which evolved into the main development framework in Southern Morocco
- Establishment of “Cluster des Oasis du Sahara” (COS, as a non-profit organization under Moroccan law) and “COS Social Business” (a private company) which help the production, conditioning and marketing of products of nearly 70 rural associations and cooperatives. An estimate of the beneficiaries, as follows: 70 cooperatives with an average of 20 members per cooperative and an average family size in Southern Morocco of 6 members. Therefore, about 8,400 direct beneficiaries; indirect beneficiaries: i) affected communities in Southern Morocco via added-value and supply-chain development for local products, ii) the whole of Morocco through enhanced access to good-quality products.
- Opening of two shops in Guelmim, “Nadweyya Guelmim”, and in Rabat “Nadweyya Rabat” in the Bouregreg Marina, by COS Social Business for the marketing of the goods produced by the members of the COS.
- Strengthening the social economy by promoting ecotourism and enhancing the value chains for dates, cactus, camel products, couscous, argan oil, henna, and artisan products. Main recipient of programme support for ecotourism is the ASTOS association: number of members is 50, so about 300 direct beneficiaries (based on average family size of 6). Indirect beneficiaries: i) affected communities in Southern Morocco through sale of products and services for tourists, ii) tourists to Southern Morocco through enhanced touristic facilities.
- Enhancing livelihoods, particularly in the Rural Commune of Asrir; direct beneficiaries included 655 families (3715 people, 1954 women and 1761 men) who benefited from: a) livelihood diversification including in the tourism and agro-food sectors; b) improved access to water (cleaning of 2 water sources, rehabilitation of water reservoirs and networks); c) sand dune fixation over 50 ha along with the planting of cactus and palm trees; d) supply chain development for local products, promotion of ecotourism and income generating activities; and e) establishment of 3 focal houses to support women socio-economic development.
- Support to the establishment of the “Network of Local Elected Women” to enhance women’s role in local development. Current number of women members in the network is 15. Indirect beneficiaries: affected communities in Southern Morocco through better representation of women in local decision-making.

Tunisia

i. In Kasserine:

- Design and implementation of an integrated local development intervention aimed at building resilient livelihoods and ecosystems.
- **Direct results:** 40 families, totaling 240 people (50% women- have better access to access to water for irrigation and livestock); 22 families, totaling 132 people have an income generating activity through the establishment of lamb fattening units; 67 ha of land planted with olive trees (150 tree/ha for a total of about 10,000 trees); 4 grinding units for olive residue distributed; 3 schools (439 students, of which 237 girls) have water reservoirs to irrigate their gardens
- **Indirect results:** Kasserine, a marginal area of Tunisia’s interior affected by desertification and drought, now better targeted by government & donor funded interventions; e.g. Kasserine served by project “Decentralized governance of drinking water”; total budget of

\$2.4 million with contributions from the Government of Tunisia, Coca-Cola Foundation, Japan and Finland

ii. Promotion of decentralized governance of drinking water in rural areas:

- The Programme played a catalytic role in the design of project “***Decentralized governance of drinking water in rural areas***” and the mobilization of partners and resources for its implementation; project developed with a total budget of \$2.4 million with contributions from the Government of Tunisia, Coca-Cola Foundation, Japan and Finland.
- Cumulative results of the project with the contribution of all partners until June 2015 (end date of Programme support, including project management support): 18, 292 people (3550 families, about half are women) have facilitated access to drinking water; 12 drinking water networks rehabilitated - Serving about 12,000 people/50% women

iii. Support to the mobilization of GEF6/Star allocation

- Support to the development of the proposal “Addressing Multiple Threats to Ecosystems and Livelihoods in the Alfa belt of Tunisia” and the mobilization of \$6.54 million from the GEF6/Star allocation for Tunisia (\$5.04 million from the land degradation focal area and \$1.5 million from biodiversity); currently in the pipeline

Algeria

i. At the Ministry of Agriculture

- Strengthening institutional capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture for the implementation of Rural Renewal Program, focusing on monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
- Establishment of an M&E system based on performance indicators; building capacity for a nucleus of 68 DGF technical and managerial staff; elaboration of an M&E manual; development of an Intranet portal, website and a magazine for improved communication and outreach by DGF;
- Institutionalization of M&E processes and techniques at the DGF both at the central and local levels and integration in the 5-year Development Plan (2015-2019) for the sector.

ii. In Magroune

- Design of an integrated local development project (PPDRI) to enhance local livelihoods and natural resource management in the Magroune locality, within the Naama Wilaya. Mobilization of funding for SLM component from national sources (USD 250,000 mobilized from MADR for a contribution of USD 130,000 from the Programme); Programme funded livelihood component through purchase of solar energy equipment to provide electricity, primarily for lighting; and the drilling of a pastoral well with solar pumping; number of direct beneficiaries 39 families or 161 persons