



## Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.: General  
30 September 2011

Original: English

---

### Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

#### Tenth session

Changwon, Republic of Korea, 11–20 October 2011

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda

#### **Review of the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)**

#### **Performance of the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies**

### **Preliminary analysis of information contained in reports from the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology\***

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

##### *Summary*

This document contains the preliminary analysis of the performance review of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). The analysis is based on information contained in the reports on the implementation of the costed two-year work programmes (2010–2011) which were prepared for each subsidiary body and which provide information on contributions made by the two subsidiary bodies towards the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), contained in documents ICCD/COP(10)/13 and ICCD/COP(10)/14, respectively.

The report presents a preliminary analysis of progress made towards achieving the expected accomplishments included in the two-year work programmes of the CRIC and the CST and their financial performance.

It also includes recommendations towards improving the performance review, which constitutes an integral part of the performance review and assessment of implementation system adopted at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP). Parties at CRIC 10 may wish to use the findings included in this document as input for COP deliberations

---

\* The submission of this document was delayed in order to include information and data depending on the finalization of other relevant documents for the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

on the next two-year work programmes (2012–2013), as well as for those relating to the update of the multi-year work plans (2012–2015) of both subsidiary bodies, to be considered at the level of the CRIC.

## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction .....	1–4	3
II. Monitoring of programme implementation .....	5–25	3
A. General considerations.....	5	3
B. Preliminary analysis by subprogramme.....	6–25	4
III. Conclusions and recommendations.....	26–38	8
A. Conclusions on the methodology of the review.....	26–30	8
B. Conclusions on substantive issues .....	31–36	9
C. Recommendations.....	37–38	9

## **I. Introduction**

1. In decision 3/COP.8, Parties adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy), which gives guidance to Convention stakeholders on implementation through the establishment of four strategic objectives and five operational objectives. In addition, The Strategy establishes an implementation framework that defines the responsibilities of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies in their support to Parties and other stakeholders in meeting the above-mentioned objectives. In the same decision and as a way of managing the planning and implementation process, Parties requested the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) each to formulate multi-year (four-year) work plans complemented by costed biennial work programmes in line with The Strategy and according to results-based management (RBM) principles. The multi-year work plans are to be regularly updated for each COP to cover the two subsequent intersessional periods, while costed biennial work programmes feed the process of consultation on the Convention budget, which is decided at each Conference of the Parties (COP).

2. To comply with the requirements of The Strategy, Parties established a new approach towards planning, monitoring and reporting within the United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Within this new approach the CRIC was entrusted with assessing the implementation of The Strategy and reviewing the performance of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies. The performance review is undertaken by the CRIC at sessions held in conjunction with sessions of the COP, and CRIC 10 marks the first time that such a review is undertaken as part of the official programme of work of the Committee.

3. The CRIC and the CST reported on implementation of the costed two-year work programmes for the last biennium in documents ICCD/COP(10)/13 and ICCD/COP(10)/14. Building on these documents, the present report provides a preliminary analysis of the contributions of these two subsidiary bodies towards achieving the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy.

4. This being the first time a performance review will be undertaken on the basis of a RBM framework, the report also seeks guidance from Parties on how to improve future performance reviews.

## **II. Monitoring of programme implementation**

### **A. General considerations**

5. In The Strategy, the CRIC was entrusted with a central role in reviewing the implementation of the strategic plan by the Parties and the Convention bodies, and in documenting and disseminating best practices from experience in implementing the Convention, thereby bringing a cross-cutting contribution to all operational objectives. Accordingly, the CRIC has a support role in all strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy by establishing a monitoring system and reviewing information received from Parties and other reporting entities as they implement The Strategy. In accordance with The Strategy, the CST is given the responsibility to fulfil operational objective 3 as well as a support role in implementing operational objective 1.

## **B. Preliminary analysis by subprogramme**

### **1. The work programme of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention**

#### *a. Subprogramme A: the strategic objectives of The Strategy*

6. Each strategic objective has expected impacts and indicators which will assist in measuring the contributions of Parties and other stakeholders in achieving the vision<sup>1</sup> and objectives of The Strategy. It is to be noted that the CRIC itself does not undertake activities to achieve the strategic objectives; its main role is to review information from other entities that do so.

7. The CRIC will complete the assessment of implementation, including against impact indicators, at its eleventh session, and will provide targeted recommendations to COP 11 in 2013. In accordance with decision 12/COP.9, the CST will contribute to the work of the CRIC by reviewing and assessing scientific information from Parties and other reporting entities, in particular on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. Furthermore, decision 13/COP.9 provisionally adopts a set of impact indicators with a view to refining them and developing proposals for improvement in order to discuss them at COP 10 and 11.

8. Building on the above decisions, the CST, at its second special session (CST S-2), made recommendations on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the impact indicators, building on the outcomes of the scientific peer review, and requested the secretariat to continue its work in this area, mainly in the production of templates and guidelines for reporting on the impact of The Strategy and further refining the glossary of terms and definitions for effective use of the impact indicators.

9. CRIC 9 considered the input of CST S-2 on impact indicators and started its deliberations concerning the review process relating to the strategic objectives. During CRIC 9 it was pointed out that some Parties will face difficulties in reporting due to the lack of statistical surveys and national level data. Parties' suggestions included investing in capacity-building measures to enable all affected countries to report on the respective indicators, and establishing a geographically balanced ad hoc advisory group of technical experts to advance the work on refinement of impact indicators. This call needs to be taken seriously in the context of the performance review for both the CST and the CRIC, since the effectiveness of the assessment conducted by both institutions depends primarily on the quantity and quality of information received through the reporting process.

10. Another challenge may be considered relating to how the review can be conducted. While operational objectives have performance indicators and provisionally adopted targets, Parties have so far not taken any decision on targets for the strategic objectives. The ninth session of the CRIC considered the analysis on operational objectives in relation to their respective targets, which seemed to be a focused way of assessing implementation of The Strategy. In cases where targets for strategic objectives are absent, then the review can produce trend analyses only, and Parties may wish to take advantage of the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy to engage in setting targets for the most important strategic objectives contained in The Strategy in order inter alia to make the work of the CRIC and the CST more effective.

---

<sup>1</sup> "To forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability."

b. *Subprogramme B: the operational objectives of The Strategy*

11. In its work programme for 2010–2011, the CRIC has a standing expected accomplishment “Parties assess progress made in meeting operational objective ... and decide on the next steps to be taken” and a standing performance indicator “COP decision which describes the next steps in the field of operational objective ... and the related work of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention, and proposes elements for the review, taking into consideration the section of the mid-term review dealing with the operational objective”. These apply to all operational objectives (1 to 5) of The Strategy.

12. It is to be noted that the performance indicators used in the two-year work programme of the CRIC (2010–2011) are the same as for its four-year work plan (2010–2013). They go beyond the reporting period assessed in this report, and therefore information that the CRIC may take into consideration emerging from the mid-term evaluation will be reflected in the next performance review.

13. The fourth reporting and review process under the Convention is the first since adoption of The Strategy and the first to be based on quantitative indicators and comparable data. Using the reporting tools and the other facilities made available through the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Environment Facility (UNEP/GEF) global assistance project,<sup>2</sup> Parties and other reporting entities submitted their reports for review at the ninth session of the CRIC.<sup>3</sup>

14. The CRIC reviewed reports by Parties and other reporting entities and the preliminary analysis of such reports according to operational objective as provided by the secretariat.<sup>4</sup> CRIC 9 reviewed a total of 16 official documents and 16 information

<sup>2</sup> As a follow-up to decision 12/COP.9 and its call for the provision of capacity-building to affected country Parties, a joint initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Convention secretariat was established to enhance the reporting and review process under the UNCCD. The implementation of the project “Enabling paradigm shift on monitoring and assessment within the UNCCD”, also known as the PRAIS project, made it possible to assist UNCCD Parties by building capacities for the fourth national reporting of the implementation of the Convention. The project focused on (i) development of reporting tools, (ii) building capacities of affected Parties for the assessment of the baseline and performance using agreed performance indicators and (iii) establishment of a knowledge management system that will inform and guide subsequent assessment of the implementation of the UNCCD. The project used subregional and/or regional reference centres which supervised the capacity-building activities for the assessment of baselines undertaken by Parties, and ensured harmonized indicator reporting in the regions. These reference centres conducted training sessions for national focal points as part of the capacity-building component of the project.

<sup>3</sup> Parties and other reporting entities, including civil society organizations (CSOs), used the new on-line reporting tools provided by the project in the fourth reporting cycle and presented their reports according to this new approach and against the agreed performance indicators during the ninth session of the CRIC (February 2011, Bonn, Germany). It is to be noted that the turnout in reporting on performance indicators provided the CRIC with a good basis for deliberations. Out of 168 affected country Parties, 89 submitted a report (53 per cent of the total number). As for the developed country Parties (42 in total) 12 submitted a report, which represents 28.6 per cent of the total. Considering that reporting by CSOs was piloted and is still under review by CRIC 10, the 11 reports received from accredited CSOs mark the beginning of a deeper engagement of CSOs in the deliberations of the CRIC.

<sup>4</sup> Preliminary analysis of information contained in reports from affected and developed country Parties, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations and the GEF on: (a) operational objective 1 of The Strategy (document ICCD/CRIC(9)/3), (b) operational objective 2 of The Strategy (document ICCD/CRIC(9)/4), (c) operational objective 3 of The Strategy (document ICCD/CRIC(9)/5), (d) operational objective 4 of The Strategy (document ICCD/CRIC(9)/6), (e)

documents, and made a number of targeted recommendations regarding substantive and methodological issues of the review, which are contained in its report.<sup>5</sup>

15. CRIC 9 focused on assessing progress in meeting the operational objectives of The Strategy against provisionally adopted performance indicators and targets, as well as in analysis of financial flows and best practices. There was a shift from qualitative to quantitative analysis, resulting in more accurate information which will enable decision makers to take the necessary action to combat desertification in their respective regions and countries.

16. Despite the fact that Parties at CRIC 9 identified as part of the iterative process ways and means of improving the on-line performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS), they recognized that the shift towards quantitative reporting is difficult but worthwhile, particularly at national level. This is remarkable since it seems to suggest that the reporting tools newly introduced by the Convention not only improve the way the two subsidiary bodies can discharge their respective mandates, but also that it has positive side effects at country level.

17. Thanks to the new reporting and review system, the CRIC was also enabled to draw concrete recommendations for measures to be taken by Parties which will be forwarded to COP 10 as draft decisions.<sup>6</sup> It is foreseen that a total number of 10 draft decisions which highlight the substantive nature of the CRIC 9 session under the new monitoring system will be prepared by the CRIC for consideration by the COP. The documentation prepared for CRIC 10 underlines the need further to refine some performance indicators and targets as part of the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy, which would require that the COP takes a decision in that respect.

18. Under outcome area 3.1,<sup>7</sup> which is directly related to the work programme of the CRIC, the CST has four specific expected accomplishments in its work programme for 2010–2011, which relate to its input to the reporting and review process to be steered by the CRIC (EA 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; and 3.2.1).<sup>8</sup>

---

operational objective 5 of The Strategy (document ICCD/CRIC(9)/7), (e) financial flows for the implementation of the Convention (document ICCD/CRIC(9)/8).

<sup>5</sup> As contained in document ICCD/CRIC(9)/16.

<sup>6</sup> A total of 25 official documents and one information document is submitted to CRIC 10 for review, including on recommendations made at its ninth session.

<sup>7</sup> Outcome area 3.1: “To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought” (The Strategy).

<sup>8</sup> EA 3.1.1: Parties gradually use harmonized methods for the subset of indicators.

EA 3.1.2: Parties use an iterative process and a pilot tracking exercise to select a revised set of impact indicators with input from Parties, scientific peer review and harmonization with other internationally reported indicators.

19. Since Parties are only expected to start using impact indicators in 2012, expected accomplishments 3.1.1 and 3.2.1 will be reported on in the forthcoming performance review for the CST. However, the performance report of the CST<sup>9</sup> records a number of preparatory activities already conducted by the CST and its Bureau in the period January 2010–May 2011 which relate to expected accomplishments 3.1.3 and 3.1.3, including the expected inputs to CRIC 9<sup>10</sup> and the deliberations taken at its second special session.<sup>11</sup>

c. *Subprogramme C: the assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC*

20. In its work programme for 2010–2011, the CRIC has one expected accomplishment: “Parties assess and monitor the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC and decide on amendments to be made with regard to the monitoring process”, and one performance indicator: “COP 11 decision which assesses the monitoring process put in place by the CRIC and identifies possible amendments to it” in relation to the assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC.

21. According to decision 11/COP.9, the CRIC was entrusted to assist the COP with the evaluation of the implementation of The Strategy, including its mid-term evaluation, by 2013. The decision also stipulates that the CRIC shall prepare appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy undertaken by the COP.

22. In conformity with decisions 3/COP.8 and 14/COP.9 on the specific mandate of the CRIC in this regard, the CRIC Bureau prepared appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy for discussion at COP 10. A draft decision on this matter will also be prepared by the CRIC.

**2. The work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology**

23. In The Strategy, the CST has been given a primary responsibility to fulfil operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge: “*To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought*”, and a support role for implementing operational objective 1 on advocacy, awareness raising and education: “*To actively influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought-related issues*”.

24. As with the CRIC, the expected accomplishments contained in the two-year costed work programme of the CST are the same as in the four-year multi-year work plan, and hence their scope may go beyond the duration of the period under review of this report. The report on the implementation of the costed two-year work programme of the CST (2010–2011) can be found in document ICCD/COP(10)/14, where a detailed description is given of the performance of the CST in the period January 2010–May 2011, including on main output. The performance report of the CST is structured along six outcome areas and ten expected accomplishments, similar to the structure of its proposed 2010–2011 work programme.

<sup>9</sup> Document ICCD/COP(10)/14, containing the report on the implementation of the costed two-year work programme of the CST (2010–2011).

<sup>10</sup> Document ICCD/CRIC(9)/15, containing the input from the CST on impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy.

<sup>11</sup> Document ICCD/CST(S-2)/9, containing the report of the CST on its second special session, held in Bonn from 16 to 18 February 2011.

25. Although the CST has a support role in operational objective one of The Strategy, the CST performance report does not include information on advocacy, awareness raising and education activities undertaken by the Committee. In this regard, taking into consideration the important role of the UNCCD Scientific Conferences in disseminating scientific information that contributes to raising awareness at global level, reporting on Scientific Conferences' achievements under this operational objective may be considered as an option.

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

#### **A. Conclusions on the methodology of the review**

26. The multi-year work plans serve as a framework for the formulation of the two-year costed work programmes to ensure coherence, improve coordination and avoid overlap. Consequently, the objectives contained in the work programme are concrete, and expected accomplishments are feasible and pertinent to the nature of, and the work carried out under, each strategic or operational objective of The Strategy.

27. Some adjustments in the provisions of relevant COP decisions would need to be addressed as regard the documentation upon which the performance review should be based. While decision 11/COP.9 establishes that the CRIC should undertake a performance review of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies, following a RBM approach and on the basis of the reports on the two-year costed work programme, decision 13/COP.9 establishes that the CST and the CRIC will report results against the expected accomplishments and performance indicators contained in their respective multi-year work plans.

28. For COP 10 an integrated two-year work programme for the next biennium which did not contain performance indicators was produced for the secretariat, the CRIC and the CST. Taking this into consideration, Parties may wish to advise whether future performance reviews should be conducted against the adopted multi-year work plans instead, using the performance reports prepared for the institutions and subsidiary bodies as reference documentation.

29. PRAIS needs relevant performance indicators that make possible an effective review based on quantitative and qualitative data. In order to review what has been achieved in terms of concrete results, the performance indicators contained in the multi-year work plans of the CRIC and the CST should become SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). If the expected accomplishment in the four-year work plan goes beyond the period under review of the performance report, the performance indicator should be formulated in a way to allow for interim targets towards achievement of the indicator. In the absence of any other category for assessment, that is, at the level of output, work package or even activity level, the adopted targets would become the only reference against which performance could be assessed.

30. Assessing financial efficiency in the absence of a fully-fledged budget and a corresponding output level (which is not contained in a multi-year work plan) is very difficult. Parties may wish to advise whether such analysis should be conducted within the next performance review of the subsidiary bodies, and also how to structure the reference documentation in this regard.



## B. Conclusions on substantive issues

31. Collaboration on impact indicators has been successfully established between the two bodies in accordance with decision 3/COP.8 which stipulates that the CST is to provide advice to CRIC discussions on how best to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. Furthermore, decision 12/COP.9 decides that the CST shall contribute to the work of the CRIC by reviewing and assessing scientific information from Parties and other reporting entities, in particular on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. Due to the fact that impact indicators will be used by Parties for the first time in 2012, the present report cannot provide a final assessment as to how the feedback mechanism on impact indicators from the CST to the CRIC has been facilitating the review by Parties.

32. One of the functions of the CRIC is to recommend methods that promote know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as methods that promote experience sharing and information exchange. The CST also has a role in promoting know-how and technology transfer when mobilizing science and technology experts, networks and institutions with excellence in desertification/land degradation issues and in creating a knowledge-management system aimed at improving the brokering of scientific and technical information from and to institutions, Parties and end users.

33. A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the two subsidiary bodies is required in order to foster synergies and avoid unnecessary overlap. In this regard, it is to be noted that the interlinkages between the CRIC and the CST will be assessed as part of the forthcoming mid-term evaluation of The Strategy with a view to preparing recommendations for COP 11.

34. Since the performance of the CRIC and the CST with regard to assessment of the implementation of the Convention is dependent on the quantity and the quality of information provided by Parties and other reporting entities, an effective reporting mechanism and reporting tools are necessary, as well as national capacities to use them. The absence of such a system would seriously undermine the performance of both subsidiary bodies in this regard.

35. Given the fact that the PRAIS portal could be used as an experience-sharing platform on best practices which would allow the CRIC to draw on commonly agreed practices and advise on policy measures to address desertification/land degradation and drought issues, it is important that the two subsidiary bodies ensure that the UNCCD knowledge management system provides coherence and easy access to information.

36. The findings of this review could be reflected in subsequent programme design and delivery, including the formulation of the updated multi-year work plans (2012–2015) and the new two-year work programmes (2012–2013).

## C. Recommendations

37. The CRIC may wish to consider this report and advise on the strategic orientation of the 2012–2015 workplans of the CRIC and the CST.

38. Based on the preliminary analysis presented in this document, Parties at CRIC 10 may also wish to consider the above conclusions and to propose that COP 10:

- (a) Requests the CRIC and the CST to make further improvements to the formulation of performance indicators in their respective work plans and work programmes;
- (b) Requests the secretariat to continue assisting the two subsidiary bodies in the preparation of their draft work plans and work programmes, in order to ensure further consistency and coherence in the formulation of these strategic and programming tools;
- (c) Requests Parties to adopt, together with the performance indicators included in the multi-year work plans, interim targets in order to allow for the proper performance assessment of the two bodies;
- (d) Calls on developed country Parties and financial institutions to provide further technical and financial support to the CRIC experience-sharing platform and the CST scientific knowledge management tools in order to enhance the effective discharging of the functions of these bodies;
- (e) Requests the CST and the CRIC further to engage in coordination work relating to the establishment of the UNCCD knowledge management system in order to provide coherence and easy access to information;
- (f) Requests the CST, when implementing its work plan for 2012–2015, to strengthen activities relating to advocacy, awareness raising and education as outlined in the work programme for the CST contained in The Strategy;
- (g) Reviews the annex to decision 11/COP.9, paragraph 2 (b), and advises on the methodology to conduct the performance review of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies following a RBM approach;
- (h) Advises on the modalities of the preparation of further performance reviews, including the preparation of preliminary analysis of performance reports of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies for consideration by the CRIC.

---