

Evaluation of the Changwon Initiative (2016-2020)

Final report

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United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

This independent evaluation provides an overall assessment of the Changwon Initiative, paying particular attention to the results achieved and their contribution to the priorities of the UNCCD and the aims set for the Initiative. Through its conclusions and recommendations, it seeks to guide actions to be carried out in the next implementation phase, from 2021 to 2025.

This evaluation was commissioned by the UNCCD Evaluation Office and authored by David Todd in January – April 2021. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the UNCCD secretariat or the Global Mechanism.

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Acronyms

CI	Changwon Initiative
COP	Conference of the Parties
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GM	Global Mechanism
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITPS	Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils
KFS	Korea Forest Service
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
PSC	Programme Support Contribution
RoK	Republic of Korea
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDS	Sand and Dust Storms
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SOs	Strategic Objectives
ToC	Theory of Change
TPP	Transformative Projects and Programmes
TSP	Target Setting Programme
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

Executive Summary

This evaluation provides the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Forest Service (KFS) as its representative, and the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism, as well as partner governments with:

- an overall independent assessment of the Changwon Initiative, paying particular attention to the results achieved and their contribution to the priorities of the UNCCD and the aims set for the Initiative
- key conclusions and recommendations in order to guide current and future action
- strategic guidance for the actions to be carried out in the next implementation phase, from 2021 to 2025.

Conclusions:

Conclusion One: The Changwon Initiative has catalysed the emergence, recognition and stabilisation of UNCCD as a leading global institution addressing desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and enabled it to support the majority of its partner countries to formulate approaches and increasingly policies to move towards Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). This process has played an important role in raising recognition of global land issues among international stakeholders.

Conclusion Two: The Changwon Initiative has played a vital role in enabling UNCCD to get closer to the field and to respond to the pressing needs of partner countries. Although the UNCCD mandate is not as an implementing body, the ultimate “results” of its policy support and scientific excellence can only be determined by their application to promote global reduction in Land Degradation and associated phenomena such as sand and dust storms (SDS). In this respect, the Initiative has been a major factor. Through its promotion of LDN target-setting (TSP) and later the development of LDN transformative projects and programmes (TPP), it has greatly contributed to early processes of national and sometimes regional activities to improve the situation on the ground. Related activities under the Initiative, such as the Greening Drylands Partnership and the newer Peace Forest Initiative and Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative are also well-placed to further strengthen the Convention’s contribution through conceiving and supporting activities, which can lead to actions at national and regional level.

Conclusion Three: In order to enable partner countries and regions to achieve environmental benefits related to DLDD, UNCCD has to contribute key scientific knowledge and to enable this to be disseminated and used through knowledge management and capacity building. The Changwon Initiative has helped enable this process through consistent support to the Science-Policy Interface, Global Land Outlook and Capacity Building Marketplace and more recently to the Knowledge Hub.

Conclusion Four: Expenditure by UNCCD of the funds provided by the Changwon Initiative has been inconsistent, with amounts earmarked for specific activities sometimes remaining unspent for two or more years. The reasons for this are complex and varied. Given the low level of human resources in some key UNCCD areas, the current process of annual allocation of specific sums for specific activities is not well-matched to the intentions of the Initiative to provide flexible support to UNCCD to help achieve critical elements of its mandate.

Conclusion Five: The achievement of impact will depend on substantial implementation of sustainable land management practices at national and regional level. Since UNCCD does not have an operational mandate at this level, its contribution towards impact will therefore depend on scaled up partnerships with a broad range of national and international bodies. Changwon Initiative can continue to play an important role in this process, both as an instigator of new approaches and as a tester of these through pilot-level initiatives with country and regional partners.

Conclusion Six: Although UNCCD’s contribution towards impact will be primarily delivered through partnerships, it will build upon a set of underlying core “products” developed in the areas of scientific understanding and its translation into policy support, knowledge management and capacity development. These areas need to be adequately and consistently supported to ensure that UNCCD is able to consolidate

its role as the leading player in the overall field of DLDD. Although Changwon Initiative has provided support in these areas, they may warrant increased attention in future to help ensure that UNCCD's larger partnership-funded activities are adequately supported through updated scientific knowledge, greater sharing of lessons and expanded opportunities to help raise capacity, particularly across the increasing number of partner countries engaging in DLDD-related activities.

Conclusion Seven: The UNCCD LDN TPP has promoted the concept of gender-focussed design and implementation of interventions, supported by funds from the Government of Canada and, to lesser extent, other donors. Much of this support has been to meet requirements of specific funded activities. There is a danger that gender approaches may remain within interventions supported by this funding package and not be fully developed and disseminated across UNCCD and on to its range of international partners. Although CI can be seen as the original promoter of the LDN TSP/TPP approach, which suggests a level of engagement with gender-focussed concepts and approaches, this does not seem to be an area receiving distinctive support from the Initiative. Drawing on the experience of the Canada-funded activities, it will be important for the Changwon Initiative to ensure that all of its activities apply a gender lens.

Recommendations

Recommendation One: It is recommended that the Changwon Initiative should be continued beyond the current five year agreement, which expires in 2023; in keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding, which supports cooperation until 2030. This support should remain focussed on activities that can have maximum effects at country and regional level, and on the underlying processes of knowledge generation and dissemination and capacity building that will be essential to enable and promote the success of these activities.

Recommendation Two: It is recommended that the planning process between KFS and UNCCD for future CI funding contributions should be based on prior resolution of human resource gaps. Detailed analysis should be undertaken of predicted availability of UNCCD staff and, where this is low, alternatives should be defined to enable delivery of the required inputs within a specified time frame (which will usually be longer than one year). Planning should agree upon the most appropriate mix of measures to ensure that activities can be implemented expeditiously. These might include, for example, short-term staff positions to be funded from non-Republic of Korea sources, consultancy contracts using CI funding, increased collaboration with other external partners with appropriate human resource availability or a blend of these approaches.

Recommendation Three: In response to the Executive Secretary's reporting that "our Parties are asking us to do more with less," it is recommended that UNCCD in consultation with KFS should undertake a detailed review of the outstanding balances of unspent CI funds and prepare a joint plan to use these in a practicable time frame to further address their priorities. When the Changwon Initiative commenced, it was the main or only partner in several core UNCCD activity areas, particularly with regard to TSP and later TPP. Building on these pioneering efforts, UNCCD has now established a range of partnerships, which are bringing in substantial additional funding in these areas. The balance of need among the different CI-supported activity areas may well therefore have changed and it is recommended that UNCCD and KFS should jointly review this situation and assess whether their future funding priorities may need some readjustment.

Recommendation Four: Changwon Initiative should continue to support the development of and help pilot innovative approaches, such as SDS, Greening Drylands Partnership and the Peace Forest Initiative, which may later become substantive work areas for UNCCD.

Recommendation Five: It is recommended that UNCCD in consultation with KFS should review the Changwon Initiative support for such core areas as science-policy interlinkages, Knowledge Hub, Global Land Outlook and capacity building, with a view to enabling an increased level of support to these activities, which are essential to underpin expanded country-level outreach. This review should take note of potential funds, which could be made available from re-allocation of existing CI unspent balances.

Recommendation Six: UNCCD in consultation with KFS should consider how the Changwon Initiative can enhance its support to the development and use of gender-focussed approaches across its own activities and those of UNCCD and its partners.

1. Introduction to the Changwon Initiative

The Changwon Initiative was presented by the Republic of Korea at the UNCCD COP 10 held in Changwon, Republic of Korea, in 2011. Its overall objective was to complement the existing UNCCD processes through target setting and strengthening partnerships to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The Initiative also sought to advance the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN) as a global target by building upon opportunities emerging within the UNCCD process and anchoring the Convention in an action-oriented approach.

An independent evaluation, which assessed performance of the Initiative until the end of 2015, showed that, during its first four years (2012-2015), the Changwon Initiative had helped to consolidate the scientific basis of the UNCCD and supported the process to develop and test the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) concept. Furthermore, through supporting action-oriented initiatives such as the Greening Drylands Partnership and the Land for Life Programme, it had helped to showcase a broad range of sustainable land management (SLM) good practices that are expected to be instrumental in encouraging more sustained actions on the ground.

The evaluation concluded that the Initiative provided financial stability through introducing flexible and predictable support for the Convention. This was a reflection of the strong political backing provided by the Initiative, which gave “impetus and momentum” to the UNCCD agenda. The Changwon Initiative was considered essential particularly for enabling the conceptualization of land degradation neutrality and related awareness-raising and advocacy; and supporting scientific exchange and collaboration for the development of an effective framework for monitoring and measuring progress under the UNCCD.

2. About the evaluation approach and methodology

2.1 Evaluation approach

Evaluation purpose and objectives

The evaluation will provide the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Forest Service (KFS) as its representative, and the UNCCD secretariat & Global Mechanism (GM), as well as partner governments with:

- an overall independent assessment of the Changwon Initiative, paying particular attention to the results achieved and their contribution to the priorities of the UNCCD and the aims set for the Initiative
- key conclusions and recommendations in order to guide current and future action
- strategic guidance for the actions to be carried out in the next implementation phase, from 2021 to 2025.

The evaluation will contribute to the priority-setting and planning of the work of the secretariat on the Changwon Initiative, with a view to supporting the UNCCD Strategic Framework (2018-2030). It will be an input to the consideration of upcoming cooperation between Government of the Republic of Korea and the UNCCD, as the findings will support further development and targeting of activities. It will also be an input to the considerations of the next steps in the UNCCD process in a more general sense, particularly for the implementation of the voluntary national LDN targets, mitigation of the effects of drought, and developing practical synergies. These matters are at the core of the UNCCD implementation.

Evaluation scope and coverage

The evaluation will assess the implementation of the Changwon Initiative at two levels: a) The performance/achievements concerning each activity carried out under the Initiative, and b) The impact/influence of the Changwon Initiative in the achievement of those objectives of the UNCCD Strategic Framework that it addresses. It will cover the period since the last evaluation (late 2015) until late 2020, a period of five years.

Evaluation questions and methodology

Both the first evaluation and the current one have been required to consider the traditional “DAC Criteria” of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. A recent revision of these criteria has added the criterion of coherence. However, this was already addressed by the first evaluation as a sub-question under efficiency, so it does not introduce new ground in terms of evaluating the Changwon Initiative. The evaluation questions and the methods used to address them are outlined in Annex 1 of this report.

2.2 Factors in the evaluability of Changwon Initiative

Mapping the changing objectives of UNCCD and Changwon Initiative

Evaluating achievements and progress across different programme periods can present a substantial challenge. For the Changwon Initiative, the situation is doubly complex. This is because the evaluation period from 2016 to 2020 covers both two sets of Strategic Objectives (SOs) for UNCCD and a change in approach for CI from Components (2011 – 2018) to Strategic Pillars (2018 – 2030). In principle, this could require two evaluation frameworks, one focussing on the Changwon Components in relation to the UNCCD Strategic Objectives (2011 to 2018), the other on the Changwon Strategic Pillars in relation to the UNCCD Strategic Objectives (2018 to 2030). Potentially, changes between the Components and the Pillars might also need a separate assessment.

To assess whether such complexity is necessary for this evaluation, a matching exercise was undertaken to establish the extent to which the changes in SOs between periods necessitated the introduction by UNCCD of completely new streams of activity and/or phasing out of old ones, or whether the updated approaches rather represented refinement and restructuring, within the existing broad approach. Further, the progression of CI approaches from one based on Components to one of Pillars was also assessed, both in terms of internal consistency for CI activities and for their relationship to the UNCCD SOs.

Table 1 below shows the outcomes of this exploration. With regard to the Strategic Objectives of the Convention, it is assessed that the transition from the original four to five SOs was mainly achieved by splitting both of the original SO1 and SO2 into two complementary components; in each case drawing attention to the need not just to improve conditions (of people and ecosystems), but also to ensure that such improvements can be sustained or enhanced through increased resilience. This might be regarded as a progression from an emphasis on reaching an improved state to one in which this state becomes sustainable through resilience. This creation of an additional SO meant that both SO3 and SO4 were renumbered, to SO4 and SO5; although their intentions seem to have remained the same. On this basis, it is determined that the evaluation can assess progress towards both sets of SOs by answering the same questions, drawing on the more refined and progressive emphasis of the latter SOs represented by the COP13 approach.

From the same Table, it can be seen that the Strategic Pillars represent some expansion of the original Components, without dropping any of the original intentions. Of the original three components, the focus on scientific process and credibility remains the same. The issue of resource mobilisation is seen to have been refined to draw attention to the need for both technical partnerships and resource partnerships as part of this process, so that both technical and operational resources are to be supported by the CI. This seems to provide enhanced clarity to the partnership processes, rather than any fundamental change. The original focus on the Land for Life Award has been broadened to encompass support to overall efforts to support synergies across national, (regional) and international arenas. It can therefore be said that overall, movement

to the Pillars approach clarified and to some extent expanded the original mandate based on components, but did not drop out any elements. It will therefore be possible to evaluate the progress and contribution of the CI on the basis of the Pillars, taking note if necessary of any increased range of activities, which may have occurred.

Table 1: Consistency and Change: Matching UNCCD and Changwon Strategies from 2008 to present

Strategic Objectives 2008 to 2018 (From COP 8)	Changwon Initiative Components 2011-2018	Strategic Objectives 2018 to 2030 (from COP 13)	Changwon Initiative Strategic Pillars 2018 to 2030
SO1: Improve living conditions of affected populations	C1: Enhance the scientific process of UNCCD	SO2: Improve living conditions of affected populations SO3: Mitigate, adapt to and manage the effects of drought in order to enhance resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems	P2: Local impact P3: Strengthened technical partnerships
SO2: Improve conditions of affected ecosystems	C1: Enhance the scientific process of UNCCD	SO1: Improve condition of affected ecosystems , combat desertification and land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality (LDN) SO3: Mitigate, adapt to and manage the effects of drought in order to enhance resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems	P1: Scientific credibility P3: Strengthened technical partnerships
SO3: Generate global benefits through effective implementation of UNCCD	C3: Land for Life Award	SO4: Generate global benefits through effective implementation of UNCCD	P4: National & international synergies
SO4: Mobilise resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors	C2: Resource mobilisation	SO5: Mobilise substantial and additional financial and non-financial resources to support the implementation of the Convention by building effective partnerships ay global and national level.	P5: Strengthened resource partnerships

Based on the above matching process, it is determined that the evaluation can proceed on the basis of the current Strategic Objectives and Pillars, since there appear to be no previous elements, which have not been carried through to the current period. If and when necessary, any effects promoted by the change from one phase to the next can be noted and assessed.

Reconstructing a Theory of Change for the Changwon Initiative

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a useful device for a variety of purposes, from the original project/programme design through project monitoring and management to evaluation. The first Changwon evaluation utilised a “Draft Logic Model” to help organise its analysis and presentation of the Initiative until early 2016. The current evaluation covers the period from 2016 to the end of 2020. As shown in Section 3.1 above, this period encompasses both realignment of the UNCCD Strategic Objectives and the transition of the CI from Components to Pillars. These changes have been shown in Table 2 above to represent refinement and slight realignment of the direction of the Convention and the CI, rather than any radical change of direction. To help guide the analysis of CI performance with a forward-looking perspective, this evaluation has therefore constructed a ToC (Figure 1 below) based on the CI Strategic Pillars and their relationship to the UNCCD Strategic Objectives, both of which cover the period 2018 to 2030. Although the ToC is arranged to focus on the more recent years of CI activities, it also covers the earlier period from 2016 to 2018, which is included in this evaluation.

Although a Theory of Change may appear to reduce complex processes to over-simplified results chains, this is not the intention. It is understood that within one set of objectives, some results chains are likely to move quicker than others. If reported progress is uneven across different streams of results, this is not therefore necessarily an indication of variable effectiveness, (although on occasion it may be) but rather a recognition that some objectives are more difficult to achieve than others. An important contribution of a Theory of Change approach, when compared with earlier approaches (often based on Logical Frameworks) is that it locates outputs at an early stage of the movement towards objectives. This cautions against an assumption that an intervention, which produces many outputs, is necessarily effective. If outputs do not contribute to processes that move towards longer term objectives, they may be ineffective, even if they are assessed as efficient.

Using the Theory of Change constructed by this evaluation needs to be informed by reasonable expectations of what progress might have been achieved by CI itself and by UNCCD building on the contribution of Changwon and other stakeholders. Based on the starting point of Changwon in 2011, there will undoubtedly have been many outputs by now. It is also considered highly likely that most of the Early Outcomes will have been at least partially achieved. Some of the pathways of change will almost certainly have gone beyond this stage to generate (fully or partially) Intermediate Outcomes. It is not considered likely that progress will have gone past this stage to any major extent.

Evaluation methods

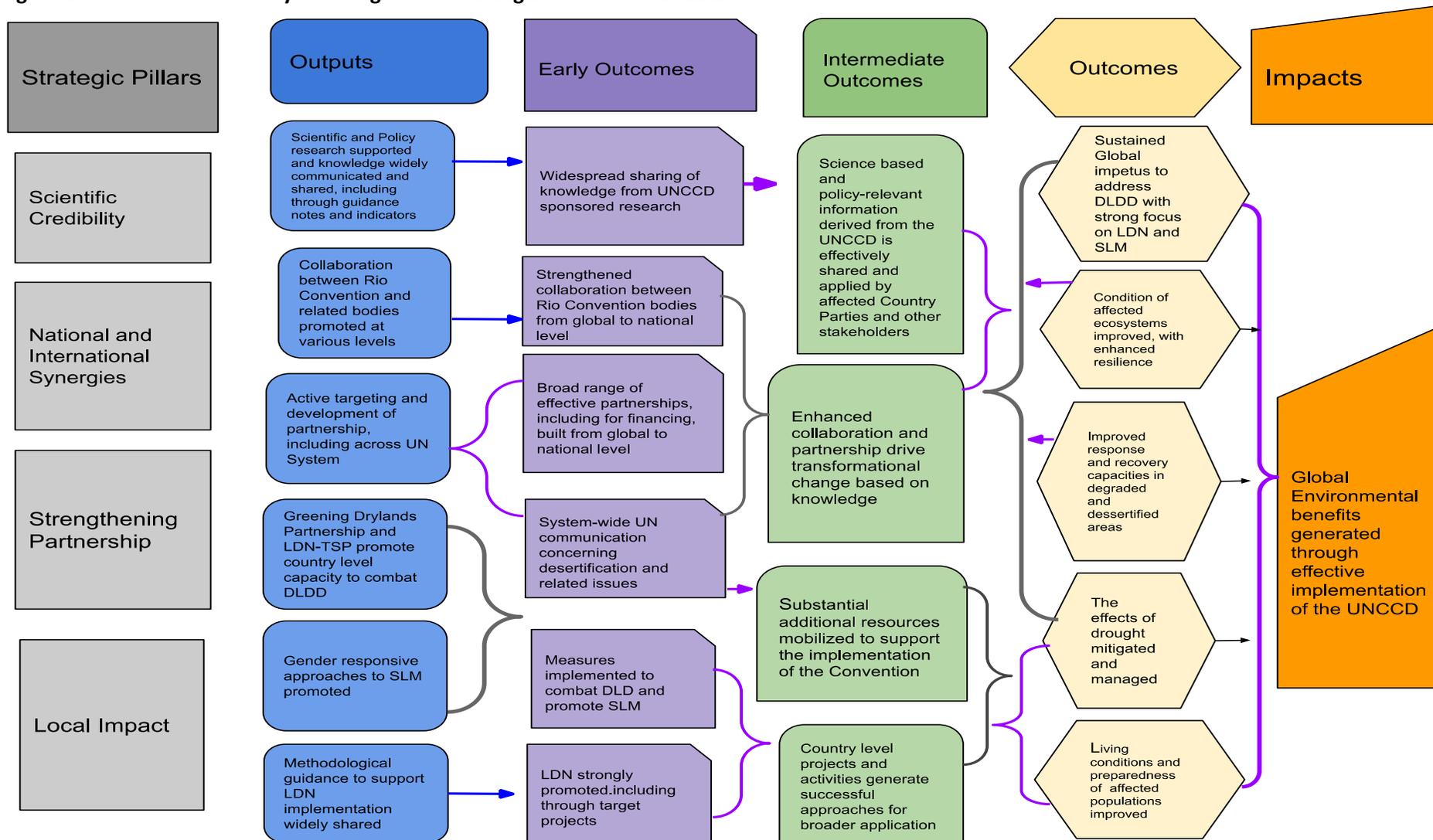
The underlying evaluation framework builds upon a Theory of Change approach outlined in Section 3.2 above. Evaluation analysis will therefore locate data gathered within the theoretical chain of cause and effect moving towards the intended long-term objectives of the Changwon Initiative. Analysis will demonstrate the extent to which the outputs from activities and inputs supported by the CI can be shown to have contributed towards the results at the level of early or intermediate outcomes.

Verification of responses to individual evaluation questions will therefore be undertaken at different levels. On the one hand, the basic principle of triangulation will be followed; data on the same issue from different sources will be compared for consistency and coherence. Documents from various sources will be cross-checked to ensure that a consistent picture emerges. Where this is not clearly the case, follow up will be conducted with relevant respondents with knowledge and expertise in the area to investigate whether the apparent differences are the result of data error or arise from varying perspectives on how a particular issue can best be measured or assessed. Secondly, evidence will be carefully analysed to assess the extent to which

the theoretically expected progress is being achieved. Thus, reported successful delivery of inputs and achievements of outputs will be examined to trace contribution towards specified outcomes, which are the underlying purpose for undertaking the activities.

If expected progress is not being achieved on any dimension, evaluation analysis will review and assess whether this is because of “theory failure” or “implementation failure.” This difference will be of critical importance for future progress of the Initiative. If analysis suggests that “theory failure” has delayed or prevented progress, the implementation of the Initiative will need to be recalibrated. This may require introduction of new approaches in addition to or instead of existing ones, to ensure that results chains showing little or no progress to date can be moved into action. If, on the other hand, analysis shows that the elements included in the theoretical cause and effect results chain are correct and complete, but are not yet contributing towards outcomes as expected, implementation failure will be identified as the challenge and the Initiative will need address the issue through more resources, better management or both with regard to the elements of the results chain affected

Figure 1: Reconstructed Theory of Change for the Changwon Initiative 2011-2030



3. Analysis of Changwon Initiative activities 2016 – 2020

3.1 Activities for which funds were committed

As described in Section 2.2 above, the Changwon Initiative commenced in 2011 and by the start of the period covered by the current evaluation, the main activities supported were well-established. This consistent programme broadly continued during the evaluation period, with some new activities being added and others phasing out. Some specific “one-off” activities, often associated with international events of importance to UNCCD, were also supported as appropriate. Since its inception, and as noted in the first evaluation, the funds of the Initiative have retained sufficient balance and flexibility to accommodate such additions. In all of the years covered, the initial annual contribution received roughly mid-year has been “topped up” by an additional contribution near year end.

The activities supported by the Initiative during the period 2016 until the end of 2020 are shown in Table 2 below.

Activity	Total received 2016-2020	Total balance
1: Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting Programme (TSP) and Transformative Projects and Programmes (TPP)	2,049,695.13	1,167,958.75
2: Global Policy on Sand and Dust Storms	539,823.01	249,759.66
3: Science-Policy Interlinkage	393,805.31	171,803.76
4: Global Land Outlook (1 and 2)	415,929.21	271,966.67
5: Greening Drylands Partnership	1,777,971.77	489,315.41
6: Capacity Building (Market Place)	243,362.84	134,811.14
7: Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting	88,495.58	14,516.92
8: Study of LDN	61,946.90	35,475.08
9: Changwon Initiative Strategic Plan	44,247.79	39,066.99
10: Programme Officer (Bonn)	115,044.25	14,489.69
11: Global Land Outlook Latin America Report	88,495.58	82,871.58
12: Peace Forest Initiative	132,743.37	132,381.02
13: Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative (SADRI) Pilot	194,690.27	94,690.27
14: The Northeast Asia Network for Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD-NEAN)	112,854.46	112,854.46
15: LDN Advocacy	35,398.23	35,398.23
16: Communications	70,796.46	65,986.20
17: Knowledge Hub	88,495.58	88,495.58
Total	6,453,795.74	3,201,841.41
% of allocation spent as at end of November 2020		49.61%

Table 2: Changwon Initiative Budgets and Expenditure for Activities. (All figures are net of 13% PS)

The approach adopted by the Changwon Initiative is flexible and responsive. Overall, the Republic of Korea supports the UNCCD to implement decisions taken by successive COPs. The amount and allocation of funds is agreed between KFS and UNCCD on the basis of an annual work programme. Within this, each supported activity receives an annual allocation. If this allocation is not spent during the financial year, it is carried over

in to the overall Changwon Fund, where it remains earmarked for use by the same activity. The activity may then receive an allocation of new funds in the next year. In principle, funds remaining for the activity from earlier commitments will be spent before any such new commitment, so that over time funds from earlier years will be fully utilized. However, as priorities change, it may be preferable to switch some unused funds to a new activity or to an under-funded existing activity in order to ensure that full advantage is taken of available resources. On occasions, UNCCD may request additional funds for a specific purpose, as happened in December 2020, when the Convention requested an additional voluntary contribution in support of the Knowledge Hub.

Given the flexible approach adopted to fund allocation and expenditure, resource flows are not easily susceptible to a “projectized” analysis. Activities supported by the Initiative are mainly located within the overall UNCCD work programme and implemented by the same staff. Much of the funding is utilized to enable staff to act more effectively, through support to such costs as essential travel, publications, conference and seminar expenses and short-term consultancies on specific topics within the core activities. Given the budget constraints under which the Convention operates, it is probable that the progress of some of its core activities would be substantially delayed without this additional support from the Initiative. Relatively few of the activities supported by the Initiative are specific to it and these tend to have the nature of partnerships and initiatives intended to build on knowledge generated by UNCCD as a whole by testing its potential application through “pilot” scale field-based activities. These activities have an important role in allowing science-based approaches to contribute towards addressing such issues as “Local Impact,” which is one of the CI’s Strategic Pillars, but challenging to deliver since the mandate of UNCCD does not include field level implementation.

Table 2 above provides a summary of expenditures recorded against the main CI-supported activities in the period 2016 to 2020. This provides an overview of the approximate scale of the key activities, as well as some smaller and/or “one-off” items funded for one year or intermittently. The figures should be seen as providing an overview of funded activities, bearing in mind that these may slow down or intensify according to overall priorities and availability of the UNCCD staff, who for the main part implement them. Furthermore, many of the activities are undertaken in partnership with external stakeholders and/or in collaboration with other Conventions and related bodies, all of which have their own bureaucracy and priorities. Finally, many of the CI-supported activities depend on country partnership and, eventually ownership, which can be a long-term process. Overall, the Changwon Initiative therefore operates in a very complex institutional landscape, with limited human resources and in an essentially supportive role to UNCCD’s mandated activities.

3.2 Assessing progress and results of activities supported

Although it is customary for evaluations to assess individual activities against their specific objectives, there are good reasons not to place too much attention on this approach in the current situation. Firstly, the evaluation is concerned with the overall effects of the Changwon Initiative, rather than its component parts. Secondly, under a Theory of Change approach, the key focus is on progress towards long-term objectives and individual results are primarily of interest in terms of their contribution to this process. Thirdly, for most activities the financial commitments are quite small, and it is therefore assumed that they are seen as focussed contributions towards a larger process. To assess whether their outputs have been delivered does not therefore in itself confirm that their contribution has been effective in terms of the overall anticipated results chain.

A further restriction on the value of an assessment of individual CI components concerns the complexity of the issues addressed. It is clear that the Strategic Pillars of the Changwon Initiative (as well as the preceding Components) do not closely align with individual funded activities. On the one hand, any specific Strategic Pillar is supported by several activities. On the other hand, any activity may contribute towards progress in more than one Strategic Pillar.

CI-supported activities are intended to generate outputs, which in turn contribute towards one or more outcomes. Using the Theory of Change shown in Figure 1 above, an overview of progress can be gained by

assessing the extent to which activities have generated outputs and whether these have, in turn, contributed towards outcomes (which can themselves be sub-divided into early outcomes, intermediate outcomes and outcomes). The data on which to base this assessment are provided in Table 4 below and summarised here.

Science-policy linkages supported and knowledge widely communicated and shared, including through guidance notes and indicators

This stream of work was well-established by the 2016 start date of this evaluation. As shown in Table 3, it has recorded a steady stream of outputs throughout the period under review. It is notable that, although such translation of scientific knowledge into practical policy advice is an area of core strength for UNCCD, there has also been substantial cooperation with other UN bodies (reflecting progress in the pillars related to synergies and partnerships). There have been major contributions to global knowledge in the areas of LDN and SDS, as well relevant aspects of forestry. A number of science-based tools have been established as resources for countries and other international bodies, including LDN baseline default data, SDS source base map and toolbox and an overarching Knowledge Hub.

The numerous outputs generated with the assistance of the Changwon Initiative have been built upon by many of UNCCD's external stakeholders, to generate early outcomes moving towards the intended impact. LDN has been a major area of progress, with widespread national adoption of agreed voluntary targets towards the ultimate goal of neutrality and pilot countries mapping opportunities for transformative projects. Knowledge has also been generated by national partners, with the posting of national LDN reports on the UNCCD Knowledge Hub.

The achievements in this area have been substantial, with rapid progress towards an initial level of country take-up of science-based approaches in the areas of LDN and SDS. Also, the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI) consisting of 25 scientific experts and practitioners has proven to be a powerful mechanism for ensuring a scientific foundation for policy decisions by successive COPs. Early outcomes are therefore promising. However, whilst early outcomes are largely generated by collaboration between UNCCD and countries (and other stakeholders), the move towards intermediate outcomes requires the national or other partners to begin to take the lead, with decreasing support from CI-funded activities. The evaluation found that this transition is at an early stage. However, this is not unexpected. Scientific credibility on its own cannot generate impacts on ecosystems, livelihoods and other areas to which UNCCD is expected to contribute. This process is dependent on the synergies and partnerships, which are inter-related pillars of the Changwon Initiative support. Progress in these areas is therefore assessed next.

The substantial results from linking science findings with policy development flag a note of caution. This is clearly at the heart of the UNCCD mandate and an area where it has significant and perhaps unrivalled expertise. However, the bigger challenge is to use these outputs as the foundation of transformational activities, which reach the field level in the many countries, which have urgent needs to address land degradation and its effects. This coincides with the strong interest of the Republic of Korea to contribute towards using science-based approaches to catalyse quantifiable benefits in terms of sustainable land management in partner countries.

Collaboration between Rio Conventions and related bodies promoted at various levels

Collaboration with the other Rio Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity and related bodies is essential to the work of UNCCD, since there are major areas of overlap among them all. Coordination with IPCC, IPBES and ITPS has produced number of technical reports, while a resolution on SDS was jointly developed with UNEP for delivery at a UN Environment Assembly. A Global Assessment of SDS was submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2016. Beyond these outputs, a number of countries have built on UNCCD support to leverage commitments from their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) on climate change to address LDN in a coherent manner with their other environmental commitments.

It is in the areas of collaboration with other relevant high level bodies that CI support has been able to contribute not only to progress at the early outcome stage, but also to promote some intermediate

outcomes. Although building on earlier outputs from UNCCD, these more advanced results reflect increasing ownership of countries and other stakeholders, which offer the prospect of progress towards transformational change. This is reflected in the larger scale of planned interventions, such as the restoration of 250 million hectares of degraded land under NDCs supported through the UNFCCC.

Progress in this area, reflecting the Strategic Pillar focussed on National and International Synergies, has therefore actually moved further along the intended results chain towards the ultimate intended impact of global environmental benefits in the DLDD area than has the much larger volume of scientific research outputs. Although these outputs are a necessary basis to enable benefits, they are not sufficient to deliver them, as noted in the section above. The work supported by the Changwon Initiative with regard to high level collaboration is relatively inexpensive and moves in an uneven manner, with frequent delays while partners negotiate their own procedural requirements. However, it makes a vital contribution to the progress towards long-term and scaled up results of the UNCCD.

Active targeting and development of partnerships, including across UN system

This area of work, which relates particularly to the Strengthened Partnerships pillar, showed relatively few outputs in 2016 and 2017, but accelerated between 2018 and 2020. Partnerships played a key role in the SDS coalition strategy, action plan and governance. KFS and UNCCD collaborated in events promoting the Peace Forest Initiative, and the Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative was launched.

Work in the field of partnership building has contributed to the delivery of early outcomes from the start of this evaluation period. The CI support to the LDN pilots, with a small number of countries, contributed to a larger Target Setting Project, managed by the Global Mechanism with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, which had total funding of \$7.9m between 2016 and 2019. This included GEF funding of \$2.75m, which encompassed financial support for 76 of the 106 participating countries. Building on the foundational work of the TSP, as described above, the Global Mechanism's support to the development of transformative projects and programmes for LDN began work in 2018. It aimed to provide start-up support to countries seeking international investment in appropriate LDN projects. This demand driven support helps participants to bring initial concepts to a potentially-fundable level, to identify partners and to move from funding concepts through to full funding proposals. Additional inputs may be made for technical support to such issues as gender analysis. Unlike the preceding TSP, this work has been mainly financed from GM's own resources, including contributions from the Changwon Initiative and the later Ankara Initiative, as well as the Canadian Government.

Early outcomes continued throughout the evaluation period and TPP implementation projects were sufficiently well prepared to target a broad range of potential funders. Related to the collaboration and synergies described earlier, partnerships developed with countries through the TSP-TPP process contributed to national commitments to restore 450 million hectares of degraded lands, moving results into the stage of intermediate outcomes.

The Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms that was mentioned earlier was produced jointly by UNCCD, UNEP and WMO, and thus represents another partnership that the initial CI funding helped to advance.

Greening Drylands Partnership and LDN-TSP promote country level capacity to combat DLDD

The Greening Drylands Partnership enabled a set of pilot projects to be implemented through collaboration with FAO, UNDP and UNEP and in close partnership with a range of national stakeholders. Results of these activities at output level helped to assess in a field environment a range of science-based approaches to tackling DLDD. There were projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and in Central and Eastern Europe. Some of the pilots moved into a second phase and helped to enhance the coherence of national approaches, thereby moving onto the stage of early outcomes. For example, in Belarus, it is reported that the first phase of the GDP project helped mobilize partnerships and resources at regional and national levels, providing a field-tested model for peatland restoration. The Ministry of Natural Resources and the local authorities then provided comprehensive support for the implementation of the project. This made it

possible to carry out work on the rewetting of drained peatlands during the first phase. Specific reported impact areas include:

- Contributed to the development and adoption of a new Law “On Protection and Use of Peatlands”
- Demonstrated an effective model for solving environmental problems while reducing the risks of emergencies (such as wildfire) while contributing to the prevention of the spread of radiation pollution
- Created synergy effects in at least three main environmental focal areas: (1) Land Degradation - rehabilitation of degraded lands; (2) Climate Change - reduce greenhouse gas emissions and (3) Biodiversity - conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem
- Built an effective coordination mechanism for the interaction of state bodies, local authorities, business and the public to solve environmentally and socially significant problems.

As demonstrated above in Belarus, the outcome of the GDP activities can provide solid inputs to policy development. Throughout the GDP process, LDN concepts and theories are tested at various situations and lessons-learned from ground activity serves as realistic and practical evidence in designing and developing expanded land restoration project/programme, mobilizing diverse stakeholders.

However, an assessment of the partnership activities showed that, although they generated potentially important lessons, there was insufficient capacity in-country to scale them up to an effective level. So at this stage the opportunity for transformative approaches, going beyond early outcomes towards major environmental benefits could not be realised.

This emphasises the importance not just of partnerships, but of working with partners at all levels to attempt to secure funding, which can both move to scale and be sustainable. In the long run, the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the work supported by the CI and more broadly by UNCCD, will depend on the extent to which the insights provided by its scientific guidance and policy decisions can be scaled up to contribute towards and catalyse transformational change at a global scale. Although this is a long-term vision of impact, it is important that UNCCD and CI should have this in mind as the ultimate impact, to which they are committed to contribute. In this context, the pilot activities supported by CI, although relatively limited in scale, provide an important pointer to the type of approaches UNCCD might adopt over time to ensure that its scientific knowledge is systematically translated into partnerships, which can generate substantial benefits to countries and regions threatened by DLDD.

Gender responsive approaches to SLM promoted

Gender responsive approaches are seen as important to contribute towards local impacts of sustainable land management. As reported by a recent evaluation, the CI is an important contributor towards the TPP project, which has established gender-responsive design as a foundational principle for LDN-focused projects. This states that, for the GM, gender-responsiveness has become an integral, non-negotiable facet of project design, especially where those projects aspire to being transformational. In support of this, the TPP project has overseen the delivery of workshops on gender-responsive LDN, has provided gender-focused technical inputs to concept notes and has produced a detailed manual on the design, delivery and monitoring of gender-responsive LDN projects.

Although progress at the level of designs and concepts is strong, the TPP evaluation raised concerns that the GM should not yet fully disengage from supported projects, since continued engagement will be necessary to ensure that gender-responsive principles are actually applied during project implementation. To date, the CI has not explicitly supported gender-focused activities through targeted funding and unless a specific plan is developed, it is likely that gender-responsive approaches will not receive the level of assistance that seems appropriate to the importance of gender in the overall Initiative Theory of Change. Although aspects of gender have received support through TPP and Canadian funding, among others, there are other elements of the overall UNCCD programme, which remain under resourced in this area, including in the Capacity Building Market Place. The Changwon Initiative could play an important role in ensuring that gender does

not become “compartmentalised” by its funding from TPP and that it becomes a UNCCD-wide strength through promotion in such areas as the Knowledge Hub and the Capacity Building Platform.

Methodological guidance to support LDN implementation targets (and SDS approaches) widely shared

This area concerns the extent to which the outputs of actions to link scientific knowledge with policy development and decisions are widely disseminated, to provide essential support to implementation of LDN and SDS approaches and targets. As shown in the Theory of Change, the successful delivery of science-policy linkages is a springboard from which movement towards impacts must be made at country and regional levels. The CI has helped with its support to UNCCD science-based approaches at international fora and through the knowledge and capacity building approaches, including the internship programme and e-learning platforms. Countries have also been supported to plan projects and programmes to help deliver against their targets on LDN, whilst SDS pilots have also been completed.

Limited early outcomes have been reported in terms of the wide dissemination of data on SLM through the Global Land Outlook and the early approaches of the Peace Forest Initiative. However, the challenge arises when ideas, which appear to offer potential, need to be transferred to national ownership for implementation at scale. In this respect, future CI planning as well as the UNCCD in general need to carefully consider how best to promote national political buy-in and also financial commitments; taking into account the current limitations of both the resources and the mandate.

Table 3: Overview of recorded results identified as outputs, early outcomes and intermediate outcomes in Theory of Change for period 2016 to 2020

Year	2016	2017	2018 to 2020	
1: Scientific and policy research supported and knowledge widely communicated and shared, including through guidance notes and indicators				
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries supported in TSP process • Distribution of default data for LDN baseline • Technical support for capacity building • Research paper on forestry and LDN implementation • Outline methodology for economic impact assessment agreed at expert workshop • High quality and substantive GLO 1 produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of default data for LDN baseline • Technical support for capacity building • Draft policy framework for SDS at COP 13 • SKBP redesigned to consolidate UNCCD work into single website and Knowledge Hub • SPI contributions to GLO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDS compendium produced with other UN bodies • SDS source base-map • SDS toolbox • Regional thematic reports produced under GLO • 2nd GLO drafted and discussed by Steering Committee • Overall GLO products have provided comprehensive analysis of issues and challenges of SLM • Knowledge Hub underpins UNCCD website and expanded to include Drought Toolbox, to support developing national drought plans 	Intermediate Outcomes:
Early outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened national monitoring frameworks for LD assessment • High country sign up to TSP • Countries beginning to leverage LDN resources through related agendas • 100+ countries assessed baseline and 67 defined targets and measure • Internship programme helps raise capacity of young professionals in LDN related fields • Successes of CBM restricted by lack of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected LDN pilot countries mapped opportunities for transformative projects • Many COP 13 decisions based on scientific knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive national LDN reports posted on KH • By Nov. 2020, 71 countries were developing TPP projects • 124 countries committed to set voluntary LDN targets and monitor trends • Studies on LDN, Forestry, etc, promoted political momentum • Many COP 14 decisions based on science • E-learning platform seen as major tool facilitating capacity development, alongside internship programme • Knowledge Hub launched in 2016 and has expanded its content substantially. Used by UNCCD, partners and external stakeholders, but no information on extent to which it has enabled specific activities or responses. 	Intermediate Outcomes:

2: Collaboration between Rio Conventions and related bodies promoted at various levels				
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolution on SDS with UNEP delivered at UN Environment Assembly Global Assessment on SDS submitted to UNGA 70 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with IPCC, IPBES, ITPS produced technical reports 		Intermediate Outcomes:
Early outcomes:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries leveraged Commitments from NDCs for CC and related activities promoting coherence Coordination undertaken with IPCC, IPBES and ITPS – and co-production of technical reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing coordination expanded to include UNEP IRP and UN-Habitat GLII 	Intermediate Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of 250 million hectares planned by NDCs under UNFCCC 90 million hectares included in National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans under CBD
3: Active targeting and development of partnerships, including across UN system				
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy brief on forestry adopted by UN Forum on Forests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences shared at CRIC 15 Strategic Plan with strong focus on partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated in SDS Coalition strategy, action plan and governance UNGA 5 resolutions on SDS since 2015 CI SP closely linked to UNCCD SF and facilitating synergies with its partners to ensure coherence KFS and UNCCD hold Advocacy event for PFI (20) KFS and UNCCD MoU to roll out PFI DLDD-NEAN agreed sub-regional action programme Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative formally launched Desertification and Drought Day campaign strengthened existing partnerships and created new ones 	Intermediate Outcomes:
Early outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDN targets aligned with SDG agenda and UNCCD SF CI support brought 11 donors in support of TSP Collaboration with UNEP produced resolution on SDS at UN Environment Assembly UNCCD, UNEP and WMO produced joint “Global Assessment of Sand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI helped crowd in new donors to scale up processes of setting LDN targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPP implementation projects target GEF, GCF and Adaptation Fund + loans from Multilateral Development Banks COP adoption of science-based decisions increased perceived relevance and utility of UNCCD work among partners DLDD-NEAN first funded in 2019 and no EOs as yet SADRI is outcome of emphasis in UNCCD Strategic Framework, but has just been launched 	Intermediate Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries have committed to restore 450 Million hectares of degraded lands through TSP and its targets

	and Dust Storms”, leading to UNGA (71) resolution			
4: Greening Drylands Partnership and LDN-TSP promote country level capacity to combat DLDD				
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement signed between FAO and Govt of Ecuador • Pilot project in Ecuador evaluated and extended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of potential of SLM practices to address DLDD • 3 projects completed and 2 more initiated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd phase project in Kyrgyzstan and new project in Mongolia • Two projects in LAC 	Intermediate Outcomes:
Early Outcomes:			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belarus pilot demonstrated that GDP activities showed field level results and made solid input to policy development • GDP pilots enhanced coherence of national approaches and mobilised partnerships • Although pilots generated important lessons, there was little capacity to make use of these 	
5: Gender responsive approaches to SLM promoted				
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GM developed and organized training events on gender responsive TPP design with multilateral entities 			Intermediate Outcomes:
Early Outcomes:				
6: Methodological guidance to support LDN implementation targets (and SDS approaches) widely shared				
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with some pilot countries to explore project opportunities • Visibility of UNCCD on SDS highlighted in international fora • CBM created one-stop shop of information on LDN • CBM internship programme for global young professionals • E-learning platform provided major capacity development tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries supported to conceive projects • Building blocks developed for LDN target setting • Strengthened monitoring frameworks to track Land Degradation • SDS pilot projects implemented in China and Kuwait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of knowledge and communication projects produced for TSP/TPP 	Intermediate Outcomes:
Early Outcomes:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP 13 takes decisions on SDS later adopted by UNGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although GLO has widely disseminated comprehensive data on aspects of SLM, scaling up adoption of appropriate measures emerging as major challenge • PFI offers potential contribution to LDN in specific circumstances, but has progressed slowly, with no Early Outcomes identified 	

4. Key findings

In Section 3, the main activities supported under the Changwon Initiative have been described, together with the results they have achieved and the progress to which they have contributed, within the overall Theory of Change developed by this evaluation for the CI. In this section, key findings are grouped under the recently revised “DAC criteria” to provide a structured evaluation of the key dimensions of CI implementation.

4.1 Relevance

RELEVANCE: IS THE INTERVENTION DOING THE RIGHT THINGS? *The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries’, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.*

Within the Republic of Korea’s intention to support UNCCD to deliver activities mandated by successive COPs, the Changwon Initiative is a targeted subset of UNCCD activities, which have been selected to receive additional support to that available within UNCCD’s core budgeted human and financial resources. It has been shown in Table 1 above that the original CI Components, established at its start-up in 2011, were carefully matched to the UNCCD Strategic Objectives for the period 2008 to 2018. The modification of UNCCD Strategic Objectives in 2018 represented a refinement and re-focussing rather than substantial change. The CI Strategic Pillars were produced at that time to ensure the continuing relevance of the Initiative’s support programme. Key elements of CI support throughout the period covered have focussed in particular in supporting the Convention’s major work on LDN and SDS. Of particular importance is support to knowledge sharing, which enables the broad range of scientific knowledge generated by CI to be broadly shared among national and international stakeholders, offering the possibility of linking this work to stakeholders with the possibility of implementation at scale.

It is therefore assessed that the work of the Initiative during the period covered by this evaluation has been very relevant to the needs, policies and priorities of UNCCD and therefore to the Convention’s broad range of stakeholders and partners.

4.2 Efficiency

EFFICIENCY: HOW WELL ARE RESOURCES BEING USED? *The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.*

The CI funds are used in a variety of ways. Major flows have supported the movement of LDN from the level of concept to one in which targets have been set by countries and, in many countries, priorities for action have been established and some have received initial funding from international stakeholders. The scientific understanding of SDS has been greatly enriched by CI funding, which has been commended by the UN General Assembly. A broad assessment of efficiency would locate these substantial areas of achievement within the relatively modest funding (by international standards) advanced by the Initiative and conclude that overall the processes have been efficient.

However, at a more detailed level, an overview of the fund flows of the Initiative raises some concerns as to whether results have been delivered in what the OECD-DAC definition describes as “an economic and timely way.” Table 2 above has shown the budget commitments and associated expenditures made up to November 30th, 2020 during the period of this evaluation. The figures show that expenditure is slower than the funds available. The system applied is as follows. A commitment is received before or around mid-year. Usually, a second amount (much smaller) is added towards year end. The total of the annual commitment is

“earmarked” for specific activities. The commitments include the 13% Programme Support Contribution (PSC), which is only taken when funds are actually spent on the specified activities.

The official Interim Financial Utilization Reports for the years 2016 to 2020 show expenditure for all years as at November 2020. These show that for funds received four years ago, by the end of 2016, 82.5% have now been spent. A total (gross) balance still remains of \$294,303.11. The 2017 funds, received up to three years ago, have been about 71% spent and show a gross remaining balance of \$349,108.09. The 2018 funds, received up to two years ago, have been only 35% spent, leaving a remaining gross balance of \$935,694. The 2019 funds, received up to one year ago, have been only 10% spent, with a remaining gross balance of \$1,011,906.13.

2020 was obviously an exceptional year, with Covid restrictions imposing severe limits on the types of activities for which expenditure is normally incurred under the Initiative, such as travel to international events and short-term consultancies. Of the annual commitments received of \$1,200,000.00, only \$4,810.26 had been spent by (near) year end, leaving a balance of \$1,195,189.74 to be carried over. Although 2020 is clearly an exceptional year, in fact there were such sizable balances from the preceding years, that it is doubtful if much of this year’s commitment would have been spent by now. The likely exception would be relatively new activities such as the Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative Pilot and the Peace Forest Initiative, which have not yet accrued major balances in their funds. Of the major established activities, the LDN TSP-TPP stream already had \$1,130,314.23 in reserve by the end of 2019, which would take at least three years to utilise at recent rates of expenditure. The Global Policy on SDS had a reserve of \$200,454.78 by the end of 2019, roughly two years of expenditure at the highest rate so far achieved.

By the end of 2020, out of the total CI funding received since 2016 of \$6,453,795.74, the amount spent was \$3,251,954.33 (50.39%), leaving an outstanding balance to be utilised of \$3,201,841.41 (49.61%). At the recent rate of expenditure (excluding the exceptional year of 2020), this balance would take two to three years to spend.

Examination of the annual expenditure sheets shows that the funds have mainly been used to support logistical and administrative processes, in such areas as essential travel, conference expenses and publication costs. The timing of such needs is often not predictable, and a host of intervening factors may come into play during the course of implementation. These include, for example, the need to await decisions of COPs, as well as of other UN and international meetings before collaborative processes can be started, availability of specialist consultants, lengthy publication processes and the need for funding from other sources to be obtained.

Based on the above considerations, a flexible approach has been adopted by the Korean Government, which has greatly assisted the Initiative to deliver a range of outputs and early outcomes, despite the challenges of operating as a support facility to the larger work of the Convention.

Nevertheless, it is considered that resources might have been used more efficiently. For example, more realistic programming could have given the opportunity to fund follow-up activities to successful pilot programmes, or to expand capacity building and knowledge dissemination to meet established needs in these areas. The challenge of gender responsive approaches to sustainable land management, which has been largely approached through the TPP, could have been funded through other workstreams to explore how the CI might contribute to UNCCD’s efforts in this area, for example through a broader approach to development of capacity with regard to gender analysis and approaches in the overall field of LDN.

Overall, it is therefore assessed that the use of resources has been uneven and has not optimised efficiency, since a large proportion of the funds have not been utilised in a timely fashion and opportunities have been

missed to support additional areas that could have contributed to CI's intended results chain. This challenge could be addressed moving forward through smoother and more effective budget execution.

4.3 Effectiveness of contribution to UNCCD results

EFFECTIVENESS: IS THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES? *The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.*

The four Strategic Pillars, which superseded the previous Changwon Initiative Components, outline broad areas of achievement to which the CI should contribute. The extent to which the CI has been effective in these areas has been assessed in detail in the section above. It has been discussed in that section that the generation of outputs, however, substantial, does not in itself constitute effectiveness, since these outputs are themselves part of a cause and effect chain leading towards sustainable benefits and impacts. A further issue of complexity is that work streams may have different expected "trajectories of change." This refers to the fact that some outputs may lead reasonably directly towards outcomes in a definable period of time, whilst others may contribute to a change process, which has a much longer timescale. This is clearly seen in the results patterns of the Initiative. Scientific research has generated many outputs, often leading to early outcomes, in which there is some element of "handover" from UNCCD to other partners and stakeholders. On the other hand, collaboration with other Conventions and related institutions has generated relatively few tangible outputs. However, these have led not only to early outcomes, but also to the beginnings of intermediate outcomes, where the long-term work of UNCCD, with CI support, has enabled action to be taken at national or regional level, often in collaboration with other UN or international institutions.

If we consider the six areas where initial outputs were expected to be generated, it is evident that five of these have generated substantial results at this level. The sixth area concerns the mainstreaming of gender throughout the UNCCD's work and is not yet so clear in terms of effectiveness. The TPP approach, which has been supported by CI among others, places considerable emphasis on "gender-responsive LDN projects." The project has overseen the delivery of workshops on gender-responsive LDN, provided gender-focused technical inputs to concept notes and produced a detailed manual on the design, delivery and monitoring of gender-responsive LDN projects. These important advances will need continuing support to ensure that the principles incorporated at the planning and design stage are actually implemented as projects move forward at country level. Currently, it is not clear how this will be supported, given that UNCCD has limited human and financial resources outside of those activities, which are supported by external partners. Furthermore, the strong work under TPP needs to permeate all UNCCD activity areas. The Capacity Building Marketplace and the Knowledge Hub have taken initiatives in this area and could be one appropriate avenue to promote increased effectiveness.

With some reservations in the area of gender, the work supported by CI has been broadly effective. There are, however, limitations on the extent to which progress is clearly established towards long term outcomes and impacts. These cluster around the need to drive effective approaches to scale, given that UNCCD has some 197 country Parties, most of which have identified challenges in the broad area covered by DLDD, specifically with the move towards LDN and also processes to address drought and SDS. This progress can only be achieved if there are multiple partnerships at different levels, coupled with very substantial human and financial resource inputs. Whilst CI has helped to establish an effective start to this process, there remains a long pathway before the challenges have been addressed.

4.4 Sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY: WILL THE BENEFITS LAST? *The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.*

Many of the outputs of linking scientific knowledge with policy developments have been adopted into continuing processes, such as policy frameworks, commitments to voluntary national targets (such as for LDN) and decisions by COPs and other high level bodies. This provides a basic level of sustainability for the outputs of CI supported research and analysis. However, for this to be fully productive, partnerships will need to be further developed and to offer opportunities for large scale actions to be taken at national or sometimes regional level, building on substantial additional funding and continuing technical support. The evidence shows that many partnerships have been established, some of which are likely to be sustainable. The work flow of TSP into TPP represents a major body of results and commitments at country level. In many cases, LDN approaches have been adopted into national policy priorities and TPPs offer the possibility of scaled up and sustainable progress. UNCCD has formed partnerships, which have opened access to much larger funding streams than it has traditionally engaged with. Its work is clearly relevant to emerging major financial sources such as commitments to the Great Green Wall and the Green Climate Fund, and UNCCD is working to be appropriately placed to partner with these and other institutions and cooperation processes. However, this is likely to be a major challenge, since UNCCD has “traditionally” been relatively frugal in terms of its staffing and financial resources and may need to adapt this approach in future, if it is to become an effective partner to more expansive institutions and programmes. Indeed, improved fund flows into UNCCD in recent years have already posed considerable stress on the limited professional staff within the Secretariat and Global Mechanism.

There are also examples of pilot scale activities, usually implemented with partners, which have been assessed as successful, but have not been able to attract essential resources to deliver to scale over time. In these cases, the sustainability of the benefits and lessons learned is severely threatened. Since UNCCD is not itself an implementing agency, this challenge is inevitable. However, it is not clear that the Convention in general, or the specific areas supported by the Initiative in particular, have in place a systematic strategy which can ensure sustainability through targeted partnerships and upscaling in support of transformational change at scale.

4.5 Impact

IMPACT: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE INTERVENTION MAKE? *The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.*

Impact builds upon sustainability and other processes, such as catalysis and mainstreaming. The Changwon Initiative aims to support UNCCD in its efforts to provide a basis for and contribute towards global efforts to address the challenges of DLDD. Its effects will therefore primarily be generated by Convention-wide activities, rather than directly from the individual activities it supports. In this respect, it is clear that the CI has successfully provided major impetus to raising the profile of global land-related issues among international stakeholders, without which approaches based on LDN (as well as in related areas such as SDS) would not have “taken off” in the rapid and comprehensive fashion, which has actually been achieved. This is considered a substantial impact to which the Changwon Initiative has made a major contribution.

Where the Initiative contributes to interventions, which are expected to have direct environmental (and/or social) benefits, it does so largely at a pilot scale. To date, while these activities have delivered results and are regarded as successful, the pathway for transformational change on a large scale does not appear to have yet been defined and assessments have reported substantial challenges to build on the pilot results. Substantial efforts are in process by the UNCCD secretariat and the GM to increase the possibilities of countries to access funding from larger sources, such as GEF and GCF and these offer potential for accelerated progress towards impact, particularly for countries that are more advanced in their progress towards TPP implementation.

As shown by the Theory of Change analysis in Section 2 above, the cause and effect pathway from the initial outputs responding to the Strategic Pillars to the final impact is lengthy and requires moving through different stages of outcomes. It is probable that all of the steps along this pathway need to be completed, before impact could be delivered. Realistically, this is likely to take many years. The question at this stage is whether progress is at a level commensurate with the resources and expertise deployed. The evidence presented in Section 3 shows that many outputs have been delivered, particularly with regard to the generation and sharing of scientific knowledge to guide policy making. To a lesser extent, there has been progress towards a range of early outcomes, including the take up of knowledge by countries in planning priority actions and by other international agencies with mandates and funds for implementation. In a few cases, partnerships or external stakeholder follow up have taken results to the next level of Intermediate Outcomes, where approaches have built on or used the results of CI-supported work for implementation at country or regional level, with no continuing involvement by UNCCD. Overall, it appears that the Theory of Change presented as Figure 1 is broadly accurate and that progress towards long-term impacts is satisfactory, given the complexity and scale of the issues to be addressed.

4.6 Coherence

COHERENCE: HOW WELL DOES THE INTERVENTION FIT? *The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.*

The Changwon Initiative is very coherent with the overall work programme and objectives of the UNCCD. This is in keeping with the intention of the Republic of Korea to support the Convention to implement programmes mandated by successive COPs. Particularly, the Initiative has enabled the Land Degradation Neutrality concept to be fully developed and adopted by more than 100 countries, some of which have moved further into prioritising interventions and engaging with potential or actual implementation partners. It may well be that the Initiative goes further along the pathway towards actively promoting implementation of measures to address than DLDD at field level than does UNCCD as a whole, notably through its pilot activities. In view of the ultimate necessity of addressing DLDD at field level in all relevant countries, it is therefore assessed that rather than passive coherence with UNCCD approaches, the Initiative is actually providing an important stimulus in the move to contribute towards eventual impacts.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Contribution of the Changwon Initiative to UNCCD Results

Conclusion One: The Changwon Initiative has catalysed the emergence, recognition and stabilisation of UNCCD as a leading global institution addressing DLDD and enabled it to support the majority of its partner countries to formulate approaches and increasingly policies to move towards Land Degradation Neutrality. This process has played an important role in raising recognition of global land issues among international stakeholders.

Conclusion Two: The Changwon Initiative has played a vital role in enabling UNCCD to get closer to the field and to respond to the pressing needs of partner countries. Although the UNCCD mandate is not as an implementing body, the ultimate “results” of its policy guidance and scientific excellence can only be determined by their application to promote global reduction in land degradation and associated phenomena such as SDS. In this respect, the Initiative has been a major factor. Through its promotion of LDN TSPs and later LDN TPPs, it has greatly contributed to early processes of national and sometimes regional activities to improve the situation on the ground. Related activities, such as the Greening Drylands Partnership and the newer Peace Forest Initiative and Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative are also well-placed to further

strengthen the Convention's contribution through conceiving and supporting activities, which can lead to actions at national and regional level.

Conclusion Three: In order to enable partner countries and regions to achieve environmental benefits related to DLDD, UNCCD has to contribute key scientific knowledge and to enable this to be disseminated and used through knowledge management and capacity building. **The Changwon Initiative has helped enable this process through consistent support to the Science-Policy Interface, Global Land Outlook and Capacity Building Marketplace and more recently to the Knowledge Hub.**

Since it was last evaluated in 2015, the Changwon initiative has continued to support major streams of UNCCD activities in the overall field of DLDD, most notably with regard to LDN and SDS. The lead taken by UNCCD in these areas has made important contributions to global responses and its approaches have been broadly adopted by Partner countries and acknowledged by strategic institutions, notably the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Changwon Initiative was the major promoter of the LDN concept and its operationalisation in the early years before the current evaluation. Since 2016, it has continued to strengthen this process through the LDN TSP, where it has supported many country partners, particularly through small financial contributions, which have enabled them to participate in events that provided the knowledge and momentum to commence national planning and policy processes, which enabled Sustainable Land Management to be implemented on a planned basis. Building on the foundation provided by CI support, GM went on to establish a range of partnerships, which placed larger financial and human resources at the disposal of the LDN TSP process, leading to the current situation of 127 countries having committed to set voluntary LDN targets and to monitor their national land degradation trends.

Overlapping the LDN TSP process, the development and early implementation of LDN TPPs in early partner countries has begun to operationalise the responses to the evidence provided and issues raised by national LDN TSPs. To date, funding for LDN TPPs remains relatively small compared to the scale of the challenges to be addressed. The consistent availability of Changwon Initiative funds for LDN TPP has therefore been important to enable the process to get started in early implementing partner countries, which can be expected over time to provide good practice examples and lessons to other interested stakeholders. Other funders have been added to the LDN TPP, notably through the Ankara Initiative and the Canadian Government, but it is likely that much greater resources will be needed to catalyse and support the increasing number of country partners.

The issue of SDS has similarly been a cornerstone of Changwon Initiative support and it is unlikely that it would have achieved anywhere near the level of international prominence it now enjoys without this backing. The range of high quality guidance documents and resources now available on SDS through the Knowledge Hub provide a sound basis on which interested parties can draw in preparing responses to this challenge and the overall work of UNCCD in this area has been internationally recognised, including through the UN General Assembly. As with LDN as a whole, a major challenge lays ahead in terms of mobilising sufficient human and financial resources to enable countries and regions to develop and implement appropriate action programmes at field level.

Recommendation One:

It is recommended that the Changwon Initiative should be continued beyond the current five year agreement, which expires in 2023; in keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding, which supports cooperation until 2030. This support should remain focussed on activities, which can have maximum effects at country and regional level and on the underlying processes of knowledge generation and dissemination and capacity building, which will be essential to enable and promote the success of these activities.

5.2 Operational Challenges of the Changwon Initiative

Conclusion Four: Expenditure by UNCCD of the funds provided by the Changwon Initiative has been inconsistent, with amounts earmarked for specific activities sometimes remaining unspent for two or more years. The reasons for this are complex and varied. Given the low level of human resources in some key UNCCD areas, the current process of annual allocation of specific sums for specific activities is not well-matched to the intentions of the Initiative to provide flexible support to UNCCD to help achieve critical elements of its mandate.

The 2016 Evaluation of the Changwon Initiative made the following recommendation. “Recommendation 4. The secretariat should analyse and address the reasons behind the low expenditure rate in implementing the Changwon Initiative in recent years, with a view to ensuring that such delays are avoided in the future”. The Management Response was as follows: “The delays in implementing the activities planned for the Changwon Initiative 2014 contribution were mostly due to the increasing global attention to land degradation neutrality, and the need to find out whether the UNCCD process would be willing - and capable - of using this concept for national level work. This matter was eventually solved in October 2015, as the UNCCD Conference of the Parties recognized the importance, and potential, of the land degradation neutrality target-setting. For the 2015 Changwon Initiative contribution, the secretariat does not expect major challenges or delays in effecting the expenditure.”

The current evaluation obtained up-to-date information from the UNCCD Administrative Services and observed essentially the same “symptoms” as those noted in the 2015 evaluation. Whilst some budget allocations in particular years for specific activities have been completely spent over time, many others have not and considerable financial allocations remain unutilised for a number of years. According to the OECD-DAC definition of “efficiency” underlying this evaluation, this situation might be understood to indicate an inefficient approach to implementation. On the other hand, documentary review and discussions held with a broad range of stakeholders showed that this situation is not seen as a cause for major concern; but is regarded as appropriate and to a large extent inevitable within the overall operational situation and approach of UNCCD.

The evaluation explored what factors may have led to this continuous underspend of CI resources, focussing particularly on the period 2016 to 2020. It discovered the following aspects, which seem relevant to the situation.

Although entitled an Initiative, no entity was established to implement the CI. It does not have specific dedicated human resources or a specific management budget, although it contributes towards the overall UNCCD management budget through the 13% PSC. One Officer with responsibility for SDS activities and the Peace Forest Initiative also plays a Liaison Officer role for the Republic of Korea and more recently an officer was seconded from the Republic of Korea, who provides linkages with KFS and inputs into the Greening Drylands Project. Responsibility for implementation of activities supported by the Republic of Korea is dispersed around a broad range of UNCCD entities within the secretariat and GM.

During the period under evaluation, a range of factors has hampered timely implementation of activities supported by Changwon. The most common factor reported during interviews is the simple absence of human resources to undertake the work. UNCCD is characterised by many respondents as an organisation, which has traditionally operated with an approach of low staff levels and expenditure. With regard to the period under evaluation, a further factor seems likely to have promoted relatively frugal management of financial commitments. An Auditor's Report in late 2015 showed that UNCCD had a substantial financial deficit. It seems probable that the secretariat and GM reaction to this was to reinforce a conservative approach involving a very strict budget discipline, particularly to staffing levels. The result of these tendencies has been that some activity areas with CI budget commitments have been unable to undertake the intended work at the intended time, since the UNCCD personnel responsible were fully committed.

In some cases, the units responsible for CI funded activities have consisted of only one or two people. A variety of means has been considered to provide the intended additional inputs. The initial preferred solution has been on occasions to employ a staff member on a fixed-term contract; but this approach is said not to have been accepted by the Korean Government, which does not envisage using its funds for staff appointments. The solution has often proved to be the hiring of short-term consultants for specific tasks. This has proved an effective way of enabling work to proceed within a reasonable timescale. However, there is also a potential drawback to this approach, in that small units could become over-dependent on short term consultancies, leading to a potential loss of coherence and control in the overall approach, which would be less likely with staff appointments, even if these are relatively short term.

Another reason for interruption of CI continuity, which has been reported in specific cases, concerns the unexpected arrival of other external funds for use in the same area at the same time as the allocated CI funds. Where such funds have had more finite time frames and conditions than those for the CI, this new money has tended to be spent first on the understanding that Changwon funds offer flexible support and can therefore be spent on activities under the same budget heading in future. In such cases, the original intention of the CI support is actually implemented, but through other funding.

In some cases, the success of early Changwon-supported initiatives has "crowded -in" larger resources from international donors or facilities. Changwon resources may then continue to be used at a reduced rate, or may halt for a time, since the needs originally identified are now addressed by other parties. Both LDN TSP and TPP, which are core activity areas for CI, have received considerable external funding, which has delayed the need to expend Changwon resources. However, even these large external funds will not be sufficient to address the global issues, which are under the remit of UNCCD and it is certain that the Changwon commitments can further contribute in future, when opportunities are identified and UNCCD staffing resources permit.

Recommendation Two:

It is recommended that the planning process between KFS and UNCCD for future CI funding contributions should be based on prior resolution of human resource gaps.

Detailed analysis should be undertaken of predicted availability of UNCCD staff and, where this is low, alternatives should be defined to enable delivery of the required inputs within a specified time frame (which will usually be longer than one year). Planning should agree upon the most appropriate mix of measures to ensure that activities can be implemented expeditiously. These might include, for example, short-term staff positions to be funded from non-Republic of Korea sources, consultancy contracts using CI funding, increased collaboration with other external partners with appropriate human resource availability or a blend of these approaches.

Recommendation Three:

In response to the Executive Secretary’s reporting that “our Parties are asking us to do more with less,” it is recommended that UNCCD in consultation with KFS should undertake a detailed review of the outstanding balances of unspent CI funds and prepare a joint plan to use these in a practicable time frame to further address their priorities.

When the Changwon Initiative commenced, it was the main or only partner in several core UNCCD activity areas, particularly with regard to LDN TSP and later LDN TPP. Building on these pioneering efforts, UNCCD has now established a range of partnerships, which are bringing in substantial additional funding in these areas. The balance of need among the different CI-supported activity areas may well therefore have changed and it is recommended that UNCCD and KFS should jointly review this situation and assess whether their future funding priorities may need some readjustment.

5.3 Using Changwon Initiative support to move towards impact

Conclusion Five: The achievement of impact will depend on substantial implementation of sustainable land management practices at national and regional level. Since UNCCD does not have an operational mandate at this level, its contribution towards impact will therefore depend on scaled up partnerships with a broad range of national and international bodies. Changwon Initiative can continue to play an important role in this process, both as an instigator of new approaches and as a tester of these through pilot-level initiatives with country and regional partners.

Conclusion Six: Although UNCCD’s contribution towards impact will be primarily delivered through partnerships, it will build upon a set of underlying core “products” developed in the areas of scientific understanding, knowledge management and capacity development. These areas need to be adequately and consistently supported to ensure that UNCCD is able to consolidate its role as the leading player in the overall field of DLDD. Although Changwon Initiative has provided support in these areas, they may warrant increased attention in future to help ensure that UNCCD’s larger partnership-funded activities are adequately supported through updated scientific knowledge, greater sharing of lessons and expanded opportunities to help raise capacity, particularly across the increasing number of partner countries engaging in DLDD-related activities.

Conclusion Seven: The UNCCD LDN TPP has promoted the concept of gender-focussed design and implementation of interventions, supported by funds from the Government of Canada, and to lesser extent from other donors. Much of this support has been to meet requirements of specific funded activities. **There is a danger that gender approaches may remain within interventions supported by this funding package and not be fully developed and disseminated across UNCCD and on to its range of international partners.** Although CI can be seen as the original promoter of the LDN TSP/TPP approach, which suggests a level of engagement with gender-focussed concepts and approaches, this does not seem to be an area receiving distinctive support from the Initiative. **Drawing on the experience of the Canada-funded activities, it will be important for the Changwon Initiative to ensure that all of its activities apply a gender lens.**

The Changwon Initiative is an early example of UNCCD partnership building and has proved invaluable as a consistent and flexible source of support. It has also been innovative in the range of areas in which it has collaborated with UNCCD, with a particularly important emphasis on approaches that can stimulate field level benefits in partner countries. It has helped drive UNCCD into areas, which have become major platforms of its international activities and reputation – notably LDN TSP and TPP and SDS. Innovation is

evident in the promotion by KFS of the Greening Drylands Partnership, Peace Forest Initiative and the Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative.

The Initiative has also supported several of the “core activities” underlying the UNCCD mandate, notably through the science-policy interlinkages, Global Land Outlook, Capacity Building Market Place and the Knowledge Hub. The ability of the respective UNCCD offices to utilise their budgeted amounts has been inconsistent, which appears to relate in particular to their small size (in comparison to their workloads) as well as to less predictable factors, such as other external funds being spent before those of the CI, because of its longer-term and more flexible approach. It is essential for the current expansion process of outreach to partner countries, which is enabling implementation of LDN and related activities at field level, that these foundational activities should remain sound and adequate to meet the challenges of increased country level activity and the subsequent flow of new information and lessons. Discussions across these areas showed considerable dynamism and the development of many new approaches, which could enhance the basis upon which outreach and support to implementation could be built. However, these innovations have often been stalled for lack of human and financial resources. This presents an opportunity for the Changwon Initiative, in collaboration with a range of UNCCD entities, to develop enhanced support in these areas, building on what has already been provided. This could come either from new funding, or preferably from re-assignment of funds in the substantial unutilised balance (currently over \$3 million) for earlier use, thereby clearing the opportunity for future funds to support emerging areas in the overall UNCCD operations.

As was noted earlier, the promotion of gender-responsive approaches to LDN and related areas is a key element of effective approaches, which can generate impact in the long-term. Based on documentary review and stakeholder interviews, the CI support in this area has so far been mainly indirect, particularly through its support to LDN TSP/TPP. This therefore emerges as an area where enhanced and more direct support from the Changwon Initiative could play a major role in developing and maintaining a consistent and coherent gender-focussed approach across all UNCCD activities.

Recommendation Four:

Changwon Initiative should continue to support the development of and help pilot innovative approaches, such as SDS, Greening Drylands Partnership and the Peace Forest Initiative, which may later become substantive work areas for UNCCD.

Recommendation Five:

It is recommended that UNCCD in consultation with KFS review the CI support for such core areas as science-policy interlinkages, Knowledge Hub, Global Land Outlook and capacity building, with a view to enabling an increased level of support to these activities, which are essential to underpin expanded country-level outreach. This review should take note of potential funds, which could be made available from re-allocation of existing CI unspent balances.

Recommendation Six:

UNCCD in consultation with KFS should consider how the Changwon Initiative can enhance its support to the development and use of gender-focussed approaches across its own activities and those of UNCCD and its partners.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix

Evaluation Questions

Relevance

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: To what extent were the Changwon Initiative's objectives aligned to UNCCD objectives?

Efficiency

EVALUATION QUESTION 2: How well planned and coordinated was the Changwon Initiative?

Effectiveness

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: To what extent did the Changwon Initiative meet its objectives?

Impact

EVALUATION QUESTION 4: What short and long term results did the Changwon Initiative contribute to?

EVALUATION QUESTION 5: What was the added value of the Changwon Initiative?

Sustainability

EVALUATION QUESTION 6: To what extent are Changwon Initiative-supported results sustainable?

To these can be added:

Coherence

EVALUATION QUESTION 7: To what extent have the objectives and activities of the Changwon Initiative been coherent with those of the overall UNCCD?

Matching the Evaluation Questions to the range of methods to be employed produces the Evaluation Matrix shown in Table A1 below.

Table A1: Evaluation Matrix

Key Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Data Source/Methods
Relevance		
1. To what extent were the Changwon Initiative's objectives aligned to UNCCD objectives?	1.1 Were supported activities aligned to the Initiative's own objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwon strategy and work plans • UNCCD strategy and work plans
	1.2 How responsive was the Initiative to any changes in the UNCCD's priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Interviews
Efficiency		
2. How well planned and coordinated was the Changwon Initiative?	2.1 How did the Initiative contribute to the coherence, coordination and efficiency of the UNCCD's work overall?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews
	2.2 Were roles, responsibilities and accountabilities sufficiently clear?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership agreements / communications / MoUs • Interviews
	2.3 How efficient and effective were the Initiative's monitoring and reporting processes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwon implementation reports • UNCCD performance reports • Activity progress reports • Interviews
Effectiveness		
3. To what extent did the Changwon Initiative meet its objectives?	3.1 How did the Initiative enhance the scientific process of the UNCCD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports covering scientific processes • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews
	3.2 What additional resources were mobilized as a result of the Initiative?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports covering resource mobilisation and use • Reports covering partnerships
	3.3 How did the Initiative facilitate partnership arrangements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCCD financial reports • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews
	3.4 How did the Initiative support a global framework for the promotion of best practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports addressing a global framework for the promotion of best practices • Land for Life reports • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews
Impact		
	4.1 What contributions did the Initiative make to UNCCD's	

4. To what short and long term results did the Changwon Initiative contribute?	strategic objectives, operational objectives, and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwon implementation reports • UNCCD performance reports • Activity progress reports • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews
	4.2 Were there any unintended results (positive or negative)?	
5. What was the added value of the Changwon Initiative?	5.1 What were the defining characteristics of Changwon Initiative support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwon implementation reports • UNCCD performance reports • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews
	5.2 How did Changwon Initiative support differ from other support to the UNCCD?	
Sustainability		
6. To what extent are Changwon Initiative-supported results sustainable?	6.1 What capacities were developed through Initiative-supported activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwon implementation reports • UNCCD performance reports • Activity progress reports • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews
Coherence		
7. To what extent were the activities and outcomes of the Initiative coherent with the overall UNCCD programme and objectives?	<p>7.1 Were activities specifically designed to contribute to broader UNCCD objectives?</p> <p>7.2 Did management of the CI portfolio of activities contribute to overall coherence in UNCCD delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changwon implementation reports • UNCCD performance reports • Activity progress reports • Other UNCCD evaluations • Interviews

Annex 2: Brief overview of activities funded by Changwon Initiative

1: Land Degradation Neutrality – Target Setting Programme (TSP) and Transformative Projects and Programmes (TPP)

Land Degradation Neutrality has been the single major area supported by the CI. The initial support to the Target Setting Programme transitioned into the Transformative Projects and Programmes area in the middle of the evaluation period. Total funding allocated to TSP/TPP in the budgets for 2016 to 2020 was \$2,316,155.48. As at 30th November 2020, 38% (\$885,840.89) of this had been spent, with nothing utilised from the 2019 and 2020 budgets, which totalled \$700,000. Two smaller additional elements related to LDN were financed. In 2017, a study of LDN was allocated \$70,000, of which only \$5,681 was spent. In 2020, \$40,000 was allocated, but has not been spent yet. This amount can be considered a victim of the Covid-19 crisis, which has meant that most of the CI-supported activities have been unable to operate as expected. The major period of CI expenditure was 2016, during which nearly \$600,000 was spent, primarily on travel and expenses associated with TSP workshops. The CI TSP contributed to a larger Target Setting Project, managed by the Global Mechanism with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, which had total funding of \$7.9m between 2016 and 2019. This included GEF funding of \$2.75m, which encompassed financial support for 76 of the 106 participating countries. Changwon documentation shows that the Initiative has long supported development of the LDN concept, including at COP 12 in 2015, when Parties were first invited to “explore options on how to integrate the voluntary LDN targets in their national action plans (NAP)” as part of their commitment to implement SDG 15.3.

So, in evaluating the Changwon Initiative’s performance on TSP, it is reasonable to assess that the subsequent substantial growth of international support in this area from such bodies as GEF built on its foundational work. This is reflected in the document “Overview of Changwon-initiative-supported Activities 2016 – 2020,” which states that the CI “played a pivotal role in crowding in new donors to contribute towards LDN TSP and thereby up-scale the efforts in setting LDN targets” (P2). This creates a somewhat unclear picture, since the GEF TSP counts CI inputs as “co-financing” generated by the engagement of the GEF, even though the CI funds were in fact already committed for this purpose. The CI has continued with its support work within the larger overall funding package, with nearly \$250,000 spent in 2018, but nothing since then.

The TSP and subsequent TPP have both been independently evaluated, utilising common categories (from the OECD-DAC Glossary). In assessing the overall results achieved in the LDN area, it is not possible to attribute them to individual participating agencies, since they are all contributing to a long and complex change process. This being so, it is legitimate for reviews and evaluations for different stakeholders to refer to the same achievements (results) since these are the outcomes of the total set of financial and other resources committed to a range of activities.

The CI has reported several results to which its inputs in 2016 (and before) have contributed. These have included: national monitoring frameworks for the assessment of Land Degradation, countries leveraging additional resources for LDN from related agendas in climate change, forestry and landscape restoration, more than 100 countries assessing their LD baseline and 67 defining LDN targets, aligned with the SDG agenda, and helping to bring in additional donors to support TSP. These results were continued and amplified in 2017, whilst the Global Mechanism turned its attention towards mapping opportunities for TPP activities. Between 2018 and 2020, some countries received continuing assistance with the TSP process, whilst others began to prepare and execute implementation activities. By the end of 2020, 71 countries were included in the TPP portfolio, as well as 6 regional projects involving 38 countries; whilst one GEF Enabling Activity with global scope was under development. In this period, nearly \$250,000 was input from CI, mainly for consultancy and attendance at workshops and meetings as part of the TPP development process at country level. The TPP design process is intended to be “gender responsive” and training events organized and delivered by the Global Mechanism with external funding are reported to have emphasised this aspect. A number of overall results in the TSP/TPP field have been reported in CI documents, notably:

- Strengthened monitoring frameworks to track land degradation
- 124 countries committed to set voluntary and monitor trends
- Increased coherence and capacity building, relating LDN activities of other national environmental commitments
- Country commitments to restore 450 million hectares of degraded lands through LDN TSP, as well as 250 million hectares under UNFCCC NDCs and 90 million hectares under National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans.

Countries particularly requested assistance in the early stages of project preparation, to develop concept notes that can attract support to develop full project proposals for donors considered difficult to access, such as GCF and GEF. The GM is helping develop a substantial TPP portfolio by helping countries to access such funds.

Small additional activities supported in the LDN field have produced a research paper on forestry and LDN implementation, which led to a brochure. A draft policy brief on the integration of forest management policies into LDN approaches was also produced.

Independent Evaluation of TSP

As discussed above, the TSP has been independently evaluated, with a particular focus on the results of GEF support. This overlaps with the current Changwon Initiative, but the two also have distinctive areas of interest.

Thus, the TSP evaluation findings on relevance, effectiveness (including of gender focus), sustainability and impact are assumed to be in principle at least partially transferable to the CI evaluation, since they all refer to aspects of common contribution. However, the TSP evaluation findings on efficiency are not directly relevant, since they apply to a broad set of delivery elements, only some of which may be applicable to CI, whilst others may relate to different institutional delivery systems, particularly those of the GEF. Findings on efficiency for the broader TSP process may therefore be of interest, but not transferable. The findings of the TSP evaluation are summarised in Table A2 below.

Table A2: Key Findings from Evaluation of TSP

Criterion	Finding
Relevance	Highly relevant to needs of participating countries and to project partners. Helped raise the profile and understanding of LDN and UNCCD.
Effectiveness	Most project outputs and outcomes have been or are likely to be achieved, with more participating countries than planned. Especially effective was delivery of core outputs of national baselines and national targets and quality of technical inputs. Some outputs less effective: knowledge management and capacity development did not meet needs of some countries. Gender dimensions were not well-incorporated in the project’s design or delivery.
Sustainability and long-term impact	Risk of loss of momentum. Countries have set targets, but now need to develop and finance transformative projects. Need to build commitment, further raise awareness of LDN and continue to raise capacity.

Independent Evaluation of TPP

Building on the foundational work of the TSP, as described above, the Global Mechanism’s support to the development of transformative projects and programmes for LDN began work in 2018. It aimed to provide start-up support to countries seeking international investment in appropriate LDN projects. This demand driven support helps participants to bring initial concepts to a potentially-fundable level, to identify partners and to move from funding concepts through to full funding proposals. Additional inputs may be made for

technical support to such issues as gender analysis. Unlike the preceding TSP, this work has been mainly financed from GM’s own resources, including contributions from the Changwon Initiative and the later Ankara Initiative, as well as the Canadian Government. The findings of the TPP evaluation are summarised in Table A3 below:

TableA3: Key Findings from Evaluation of TPP

Criterion	Finding
Relevance	Country-driven approach has assured relevance to country and regional priorities and needs, as well as its coherence with their policies and other activities. The provision of support at early stages of project concept development meets a critical need, which is not otherwise covered by potential funding partners. This work has also been relevant to a range of international funding and implementing agencies; but there is scope to raise the profile of LDN among these.
Effectiveness	Demand-driven model has helped deliver short-term results and countries and partners find it responsive and effective.
Sustainability and long-term impact	High potential to support long-term results, since 63 project concepts are targeting over \$1.74 billion in funding. Project partners felt that sustainability could be improved if GM support continued during implementation. Improved TPP monitoring could improve understanding of long-term effects. TPP support has helped raise the incorporation of gender dimensions, including mainstreaming, into project designs. It will be challenging to see this put into practice, since TPP support is not available at this stage.

2: Global Policy on Sand and Dust Storms

Growing concerns from the global community concerning the adverse effects of Sand and Dust Storms led to the 2015 adoption of decisions and resolutions at UNCCD COP and UNGA, followed by further resolutions at the UN Environment Assembly and UNGA. Responding to these growing concerns the KFS included SDS in the support it offered through the CI.

In 2016, the Secretariat collaborated with UNEP to deliver a resolution on SDS at the UN Environment Assembly. CI supported an International Expert Workshop in Korea, which led to the launch of a global economic impact assessment strategy for SDS and a Global Assessment Report, presented at the 71st Session of UNGA, which adopted a resolution on SDS. The next year, the secretariat presented a draft policy framework for SDS at COP 13 and pilot projects were implemented in China and Kuwait. COP adopted three other decisions on SDS, concerning capacity building, partnership and LDN.

Between 2018 and 2020 there was little expenditure on SDS, but the secretariat developed a technical SDS Compendium, in collaboration with other UN organizations. Later, a SDS source map was developed as well as an SDS toolbox. The Secretariat actively participated in the UN Coalition on Combating and Dust Storms, helping to develop its strategy, action plan and governance guidelines.

Overall, UNCCD has been a driving force in the global movement to combat SDS and has provided many of the main knowledge resources for countries and other stakeholders to use.

During the period under review, the Global Policy on SDS has been allocated \$610,000 through the CI, of which about half has been spent. In 2016, the China pilot project received funds, as well various small consultancies and publication support. In 2017 an allocation was made towards SDS and Drought in Central

Asia as well as to the WOCAT network. Thereafter, support was for small consultancies, India COP and publications.

3: Science-Policy Interlinkage

In 2016 and 2017, when the great majority of SPI expenditure was recorded, activities supported two science to policy objectives: scientific advice concerning the operationalization of voluntary LDN targets and scientific assessment of the potential contribution of sustainable land management to address DLDD and climate change. Support was also provided for coordination with other key scientific bodies, as well as to the secretariat's work programme and the Global Land Outlook. The Scientific Conceptual Framework for Land Degradation Neutrality was endorsed at COP 13 in 2017 and provided a key resource for the TSP and TPP activity areas. The programme continued, with a lower level of inputs in 2018, mainly for translation services.

Science-Policy interface work continued in 2018 and 2019, with many COP and other decisions based at least partially on science. This sound scientific basis is seen as benefitting external perceptions of the value of UNCCD's work.

The SPI has been allocated a total of \$445,000 over the evaluation period, of which about half has been spent. After consistent expenditure in 2016 and 2017, there was little in 2018 and no budget was allocated for 2019. However, in 2020, \$150,000 was budgeted for this area. Expenditures have been for small scale costs associated with attendance at workshops and meetings, translation costs and publication support.

4: Global Land Outlook

The GLO has been allocated \$470,000 over the period of this evaluation, of which about 35% has been spent. The years 2016 and 2017 saw substantial expenditure, which has dropped off sharply since then, although budgets have been fairly consistent. Expenditure has been mainly for travel costs to attend meetings and for report production.

The Global Land Outlook is a communications publication and platform, which aims to raise awareness of and disseminate scientifically sound information to enable governments and other stakeholders to better formulate their approaches to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality. CI is one contributor to the production costs of this report. The GLO 1st edition highlighted key pathways of action, illustrated by case studies in such areas as integrated land and water management, land use policies and practices and technical and institutional capacity building. It was evaluated as a substantial and useful document and preparations were made for a second edition, as well as for a set of regional GLO-style reports, with separate funding for a Latin America Report. Preliminary work for the main report is largely completed and regional thematic reports are under production.

Although the GLO has been assessed as a potentially useful resource, the challenge remains to promote use of its approaches and knowledge in country level policy and investment decisions concerning Sustainable Land Management.

5: Greening Dryland Partnership

The Greening Dryland Partnership has been financially supported by the CI throughout the evaluation period. Total commitments have been made of \$2,009,108.09, of which \$1,293,586.48 has been spent (64%), with \$715,521.61 remaining. Expenditure was high in the years 2016 and 2017, and reduced thereafter. In 2016, the total expenditure was a transfer to FAO for its role in Ecuador. In 2017, funds were transferred to several implementing countries and there also smaller allocations to small activities supporting the Partnership. In 2018 Belarus received second phase support, while there was no expenditure in 2019. During 2020, Covid-19 curtailed most activities under the Initiative, including the Partnership

The Greening Dryland Partnership was launched at the COP 2011, through a tripartite MOU between UNCCD, UNEP and KFS. It aimed to focus on forest and ecosystem restoration in degraded lands, biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation/mitigation. A pilot project was implemented in Ecuador

between 2014 and 2016 and received a further allocation in 2016, following a Mid Term Evaluation, for continuation as the project Integrated Management to combat desertification and for adaptation to climate change (GIDACC). Implementation was undertaken by FAO and it is reported that the approach tested in pilot areas was appropriate for integration into the national LDN process and related programmes.

From 2017, project implementation also focussed in eastern Europe, with projects in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and later Belarus, Armenia and Mongolia. The project in Belarus was evaluated and supported for a second phase, with a focus on restoration of dried peatlands.

A project was implemented in Peru in 2018 and 2019 and another was launched in Ecuador in 2018.

In terms of reported results, lessons learned from the tested approaches have been seen as providing useful inputs into policy formulation concerning LDN and in promoting expanded field programmes. However, it is also reported that the learning opportunities from the Partnership have not yet been well-utilised.

6: Capacity Building (Marketplace)

Since the inception of UNCCD, capacity building has been an important part of its work. The secretariat established the Capacity Building Marketplace as a core element of its approach in this area.

The Marketplace has made modest contributions to consultancies, workshops and a capacity building regional NGO in Latin America. Overall, UNCCD capacity building activities have included compiling information on learning opportunities, eLearning courses, translation of relevant materials into French and Spanish, database of relevant experts and consultants, exhibitions and competitions and a comprehensive internship programme. The UN Joint Inspection Unit assessed the Marketplace to be among UN best practice. CI inputs from its 2018 budget were mainly contributions towards consultancy costs and to a Latin American regional NGO. The secretariat established an e-learning platform, translated various courses into Spanish and upgraded the internship programme.

Overall, the CBM has been limited by its lack of resources. It needs to be able to conduct more research on available capacity building opportunities, expand its eLearning and other courses, scale up translation of relevant instruments and documents to ensure greater geographical coverage and improve promotion of the CBM and its knowledge resources.

There has been a capacity building budget under the CI for four of the five years covered by this evaluation. A total budget of \$275,000 has been about 39% spent, with activities recorded in 2016 and 2018. In the 2020 CI budget, 100,000 was allocated specifically for the Knowledge Hub, in a separate allocation to that for the Capacity Building Market Place. In December 2020, the Executive Secretary requested that the KFS should make an additional voluntary contribution for the Knowledge Hub.

7: Asia Pacific Regional Meeting

According to a 2016 report, Regional meetings support UNCCD decision-making process and assist parties in generating decisions by COP. As platforms for information exchange they support the UNCCD NFPs in carrying out their tasks in implementing the UNCCD at national level. Specifically, regional meetings preparatory to the sessions of COP and/or its subsidiary are instrumental for Parties to learn and discuss on matters before the negotiations, and to agree on regional approaches and priorities of the UNCCD, taking into account the specific strengths and needs of each region. In preparation of CRIC 15 (October 2016, Nairobi, Kenya), a regional meeting of Annex II was organized in Songdo, Korea from 7 to 8 September 2016 at the invitation of the Korea Forest Service. Asian representatives discussed the CRIC 15 issues to enhance the implementation process. They agreed on a regional approach to the future priorities of the UNCCD and related reporting, which can feed in UNCCD decision making process.

8: Study Of LDN

Addressed under LDN (1) above.

9: Development of CI Strategic Plan

Funded in 2017, following first evaluation of Changwon Initiative

10: Programme Officer, Bonn

Funded in 2017 only, after which RoK appears to have excluded funding of staff appointments.

11: Global Land Outlook – Latin America Report

Addressed under Global Land Outlook (4) above.

12: Peace Forest Initiative

The idea for the Peace Forest Initiative was put into place in 2018, when it received a gross allocation of \$50,000, which remains largely unspent. It received a further allocation of \$100,000 in 2020. The PFI aims to provide a platform to facilitate cooperation and collaboration on LDN implementation in fragile and post-conflict situation. The secretariat and Government of the Republic of Korea worked together on a Forum and on an advocacy event and the PFI was formally launched in September 2019 and received support from UNCCD parties.

In January 2020, the secretariat and KFS signed an MoU to begin rollout of the PFI and to date two countries have formally indicated interest.

Overall, the programme has barely started and there are no outputs, suggesting a slow start-up.

13: Southern Africa Drought Resilience Initiative Pilot

Under the 2018 – 2030 UNCCD Strategic Framework, drought received high priority. The Southern African Development Community countries are highly vulnerable to droughts and water scarcity hampers their development. With support from the Changwon Initiative, a programme of sub-regional activities has been proposed, making use of the Drought Initiative and Drought Toolbox. This aims to raise technical and institutional capacity and facilitate data sharing relevant to drought risk mitigation.

An Inception workshop was held virtually late in 2020 and virtual consultation workshops have been organized. As yet, there have been no outputs.

The activity received a budget of \$220,000, of which about half was spent in that year, through a payment of \$100,000 to IUCN for implementation activities.

14: Northeast Asia Network for DLDD Sub-regional Activity

The DLDD-NEAN is established as an official reporting entity of the Convention. It aims to promote sub-regional cooperation, including for joint forestry projects and received its first funding in 2019. It has agreed on a sub-regional action programme focussed on land degradation and sand and dust storms. The Korea Forest Service provides a secretariat function to the network. The network agreed to commence a subregional SDS project in December 2019, which was included in the 2019 budget, but has been largely unused to date. The network so far has no outputs.

Funding of \$127,525.54 was included in the 2019 budget, of which only \$518 dollars is reported as spent.

15: LDN Advocacy

Specific funding allocation in 2020, in support of overall LDN work.

16: Communication

Funded in 2020 as a contribution towards Desertification and Drought day, which was eventually held online, in response to Covid19 restrictions.

17: Knowledge Hub

Funding received in 2020 in support of development of the SDS toolbox and supported one in-person and one virtual workshop.

Annex 3: Persons contacted

Persons interviewed or submitting written responses to the evaluation process

Organisation	Contact
UNCCD secretariat	Mr. Utchang Kang Programme officer, sand and dust storms, ERPA* Liaison Officer for Rep. of Korea
UNCCD secretariat	Ms. Miriam Medel Chief, ERPA* (recently appointed)
UNCCD secretariat	Mr. Seoksung Lim Programme officer for Asia, ERPA*
UNCCD GM	Ms. Louise Baker Managing Director
UNCCD secretariat	Mr. Lyndle Lindow Chief of Administrative Services
UNCCD secretariat	Mr. Barron J. Orr Lead Scientist, STI*
UNCCD secretariat	Mr. Sasha Alexander Policy officer, ERPA*
UNCCD secretariat	Prof. Richard Byron-Cox Head UNCCD Capacity Building and Innovation Office
UNCCD GM	Ms. Cathrine Mutambirwa Mr. Pedro Lara Team of programme officers working on LDN country support
UNCCD secretariat	Mr. Jeroen van Dalen Knowledge management officer
Korea Forest Service	Ms. Min-Young, Chang, Deputy Director
Korea Forest Service	Mr. Jun-Gyo, Lee, Program Officer
Korea Forest Service	Ms. Ha-Na, Cho, Program Officer

* ERPA: Unit for External Relations, Policy and Advocacy

STI: Unit for Science, Technology and Innovation

Annex 4: Documentary sources cited in text

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