

**ENHANCED
COLLABORATION
BETWEEN
THE GLOBAL
MECHANISM
AND THE
SECRETARIAT OF
THE CCD IN ASIA**



SCOPE OF COLLABORATION

The Global Mechanism (GM) and the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) are two of the main Convention bodies, which have different yet complementary roles in supporting country Parties in implementing the Convention at national, sub-regional and regional levels. In order to maximise the impact of their efforts, they have developed a joint strategy to support Asian country Parties in a number of activities, thus assuring more efficient delivery of financial and technical support. The focus of these joint activities is on support to National Action Programme (NAP) formulation in 15 countries of South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific and on the launching of the Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) of the Regional Action Programme (RAP).

SUPPORT TO NAP FORMULATION IN SOUTH ASIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (NATIONAL LEVEL)

In October 2001, during the Fifth Conference of Parties of the Convention (COP V), a number of countries from South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific expressed their readiness to translate their commitment to the CCD into a national planning and policy instrument – the NAP. As a follow-up to COP V and in response to requests from country Parties including Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Indonesia, the GM, in collaboration with the CCD Secretariat, provided financial and technical support for joint activities which led to the development of the NAPs. More recently, other countries of the region have submitted their requests to the GM and the CCD Secretariat for NAP formulation support. As a result, on 11 June 2003, during the Second Asian Ministerial Conference on CCD Implementation in Preparation for the Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties to CCD, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, the GM and the CCD Secretariat signed a partnership agreement to support the development of NAPs for Bangladesh, Fiji, Myanmar, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. These activities will commence in late 2003. Under the Agreement, the Secretariat will provide assistance to the governments concerned and the National Focal Points will steer the process, while the GM will make available to the Secretariat the requested budget of USD 8 000 per country (USD 80 000 in total) to finance the development of the NAPs.



THE CCD IN ACTION

COMBATING LAND DEGRADATION AND POVERTY IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF NAP SUPPORT

In each country, the following specific objectives have been or are being pursued:

- taking stock of information and research on bio-physical, climatic and socio-economic conditions;
- reviewing national policy measures and activities aimed at combating desertification, mitigating the effects of drought and promoting sustainable land management;
- studying the draft NAPs with a view to finalizing and adopting it, in accordance with the identified time-frame;
- examining some of the specific field project concepts/proposals that can be finalized and annexed to the NAP, as priority activities in the initial phase of NAP implementation;
- assessing the local and national networks of stakeholders and institutions that have been playing an important role in implementing the policy measures and activities with the aforementioned objectives and exploring ways for enlarging and strengthening such networks; and
- partnership-building with donor countries/agencies to support the activities so as to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

NAP-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Global Mechanism and the Secretariat have supported the countries by:

- assisting with background papers to the draft NAPs, aimed at facilitating activities to combat desertification, rehabilitating degraded lands, mitigating the effects of drought and promoting sustainable land management;
- facilitating the logistic arrangements for national/provincial meetings to review draft policy papers and conducting discussions with a view to finalising these papers for their effective implementation;
- supporting the identification of areas where catalytic intervention in reversing land degradation and fostering sustainable land management will have multiple environmental and socio-economic benefits, bolstering the formulation of concept proposals for field activities that can be annexed to the NAP;
- promoting dialogue and interaction between a wide range of stakeholders to invigorate activities in order to achieve the objectives set; and
- brokering consultations between national stakeholders and representatives of donor countries/agencies with a view to strengthening partnerships that will support the development and implementation of NAP activities.



SUPPORT FOR THE LAUNCHING OF THE TPN (REGIONAL LEVEL)

The Beijing Ministerial Conference on Regional Co-operation for CCD implementation in Asia (1997) decided upon a framework for implementation of the Convention. Six TPNs hosted by six countries of the region, now constitute the core structure of the Asian RAP, as follows:

- TPN1:** Desertification Monitoring and Assessment, (China).
- TPN2:** Agro-forestry and Soil Conservation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid areas, (India).
- TPN3:** Rangeland Management in Arid Areas including Sand-dune Fixation, (Iran).
- TPN4:** Water Resources Management for Agriculture in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry, Sub-humid Areas, (Syria).
- TPN5:** Strengthening Capacities for Drought Impact Mitigation and Combating Desertification, (Mongolia).
- TPN6:** Assistance with the Implementation of Integrated Local Area Development Programme (LAPD) initiatives, (Pakistan).

In 2000, the GM and the Secretariat started a process for the launching of the TPNs. The first four are now operational, TPN5 is soon to be launched in Mongolia, and the time-frame for the launching of TPN6 will be determined shortly.

Operationalization of the TPNs is the responsibility of the host country, in collaboration with the member countries and with the support of the CCD Secretariat. Adopting the most pragmatic approach in each case, the GM has provided funding either through the Secretariat or directly to the country Party for an amount of USD 50 000 per TPN.

TPN OBJECTIVES

TPNs are participatory, voluntary-member networks comprising the region which are concerned by the issues covered by the TPN. The overall objective of the TPNs is to promote dynamic exchange of knowledge and know-how between TPN members, in order to promote more sustainable practices in the field of natural resource management and activities to combat desertification. The networks are rendered operational through a participatory approach which fosters transparent exchange of information and the added value of these networks is dependent upon the countries interest in promoting the use of such networks. Ultimately the aim is to strengthen and develop the capacities of Asian country partners for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.



TPN ACTIVITIES

The GM and the Secretariat have provided or are providing support for the following activities:

- convening workshops in the respective host countries;
- ensuring that start-up activities relating to the establishment of TPNs are initiated after the workshop, in accordance with the network programme determined at the workshop; and
- identifying priorities for the development of project proposals.

The launching workshops have focused on the following sub-activities:

- taking stock of the sub-regional, regional and international activities that facilitate the development of human resources, institutional capacities and existing capacity-building networks at local and national levels, so as to identify the added value the TPN provides;
- discussing and reaching a consensus on the framework for and priority activities of the proposed TPNs;
- conceptualizing the networks to facilitate capacity-building of national stakeholders in formulating and implementing dryland management projects;
- reviewing the design of the TPN information system (information and communication technologies, database, etc.), determining the housing modalities for the information platform, and delineating the roles, tasks and responsibilities of the host institute and those of the member countries; and
- identifying priority action areas and follow-up activities to operationalize the networks and synergies with the NAP and other TPNs.

Once the launching workshop has been held, the focus is generally on start-up activities relating to the establishment of the TPN, in accordance with the network programme determined at the workshop.

THE WAY FORWARD

The joint efforts of the Global Mechanism and the Secretariat of the Convention will continue to enhance the support provided to country Parties in Asia with a view to implementing the main strategic thrusts of the Convention through concrete initiatives. The GM and the Secretariat will seek efficient ways to further develop collaboration in partnership with members of the GM's Facilitation Committee, donor-partners and the country Parties.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Dr Khalida Bouzar
Programme Manager for Asia,
the Pacific and North Africa
Email: k.bouzar@ifad.org
Or consult the following website:
<http://www.gm-unccd.org>