



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification

**Advancing global thinking and knowledge sharing
on inclusive and sustainable development
in drylands and other fragile ecosystems**



 **Annual Report 2017**

ACRONYMS:

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
AADP	Africa-Asia Drought Risk Management Peer Assistance Network
BES-Net	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CoBRA	Community Based Resilience Analysis
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSA	Cost Sharing Agreement
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ELD	Economics of Land Degradation Initiative
EMG	Environment Management Group
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GC-RED	Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GLO	Global Land Outlook
GM	Global Mechanism
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
IDDP	Integrated Drylands Development Programme
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans Forum
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PAGoDA	Pillar Assessed Grant or Delegation Agreement
PBL	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
P-E	Poverty-Environment
PEAS	Poverty-Environment Action for the Sustainable Development Goals
PEF	Poverty Environment Facility
PEI	Poverty-Environment Initiative
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SP	Strategic Plan
SRC	Stockholm Resilience Centre
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environmental Assembly
USD	United States Dollars
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre

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The Centre's 2017 work plan was implemented effectively, leading to the achievement of significant results in all the areas of work of the Centre.

Prominent during this reporting period was the Centre's contribution to the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, which resulted in excellent visibility and positioned UNDP as a valued partner for global work on "Land Degradation Neutrality".

The Centre pursued its work on "Resilience Building", providing technical assistance to UNDP country offices and their national partners on resilience assessment, planning and programming in selected countries in Africa and the Arab States.

The "Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network" (BES-Net) became fully operational with the organization of the first "Regional Dialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development" and the initiation of national assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The Centre continued to lead the UNDP Managing Agent function for the "Poverty-Environment Initiative" (PEI), and worked successfully with UN Environment on developing and mobilizing resources for a new global programme, "Poverty-Environment Action for the SDGs" (PEAS).

In 2017, the Centre implemented a total portfolio of more than USD 8 million through three different projects, namely: the Centre's Programme or GC-RED project, covering land, resilience and BES-NET activities; the Poverty-Environment Initiative; and the Integrated Drylands Development Programme (IDDP). While the IDDP was completed in December 2017; PEI will close in 2018. The Centre expects to have a portfolio of about USD 23 million for the implementation of its active initiatives (GC-RED, BES-Net and PEI/PEAS) over the next 3 years.

Despite this success, resource mobilization for the work of the Centre remains a key task against a background of a continuously challenging international aid environment and reduced core funding to the Centre. Efforts are underway to mobilize new resources for the Centre's land and resilience-related work. Securing funds to cover staff costs and operations will remain a key priority in the years to come.



This section highlights the main results achieved under the GC-RED project in terms of advancing global thinking and knowledge sharing on sustainable development in drylands and other fragile ecosystems. It outlines the progress made and achievements generated in the areas of: I) natural capital; II) ecosystems and livelihoods resilience building; and III) knowledge management and networking.

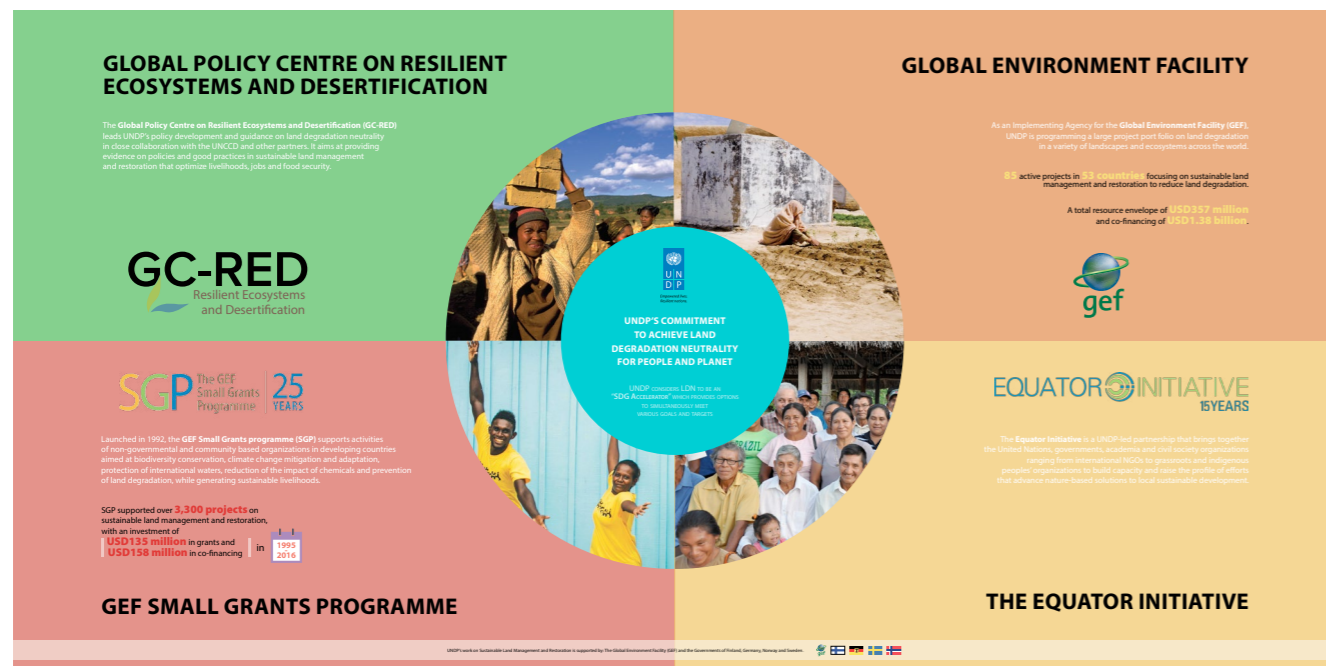
I. NATURAL CAPITAL



Prominent during this reporting period is the Centre's contribution to the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held in Ordos, China, in September to approve the new Strategic Framework of the Convention for 2018-2030. GC-RED coordinated UNDP's participation in COP13 which resulted in excellent visibility and positioned UNDP as a valued partner for global sustainable land management work. In a letter to the UNDP Administrator, the UNCCD Executive Secretary indicated that the "significant achievements of the Ordos Conference of the Parties were made possible by UNDP's contribution and the support provided through the Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification".

LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN)

The Centre led the preparation of UNDP's position paper for COP13 titled "Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality for People and Planet". The paper articulates UNDP's position on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), the guiding principle for UNCCD implementation in 2018-2030. It asserts UNDP's commitment to support countries on sustainable land management and restoration in the context of "Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 – Life on Land", particularly Target 15.3 on "combating desertification, restoring degraded land and achieving land degradation neutrality." It defines UNDP's three-pronged approach to supporting countries on LDN: through capacity development, advocacy and policy advice; support to the adoption and demonstration of locally-appropriate technologies and approaches; and access to blended finance packages to implement transformative projects to meet national LDN targets by 2030. It concludes that LDN is an "SDG Accelerator" which provides options to simultaneously meet the SDGs on land, water, food security, poverty and climate change in a cost-effective and ecologically sound manner. The position paper is the result of a well-coordinated team effort by GC-RED, the Global Environmental Finance Unit, the GEF Small Grants Programme and the Equator Initiative, reflecting UNDP's comprehensive policy and programme support on sustainable land management.



GLOBAL LAND OUTLOOK



The first edition of the “Global Land Outlook (GLO)” was launched at UNCCD/COP13. It is a landmark report on the current and future state of the world’s land resources published by the UNCCD in partnership with UNDP. GC-RED provided technical and financial support to prepare this report, including 13 working papers on strategic issues addressed in the GLO. These papers were prepared in collaboration with a variety of partners including the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) and Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative.

The GLO highlights the central importance of land quality to human well-being, assesses current trends in land conversion, degradation and loss, identifies the driving factors and analyzes the impacts, provides scenarios for future challenges and opportunities, and presents a new and transformative vision for land management policy, planning and practice at global and national scales.



In his remarks, the Head of the UNDP Delegation welcomed this strategic publication which demonstrates that “informed and responsible decision-making, improved land management policies and practices, and simple changes in our everyday lives, can help to reverse the current worrying trends of land degradation”. The press release included a quote from the UNDP Administrator stating that “Achieving land degradation neutrality can provide a healthy and productive life for all on Earth, including water and food security”.

Up-close: Building Capacity for LDN (SDG Target 15.3)

In partnership with the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD, GC-RED pursued its capacity building support on LDN. It provided technical assistance to four countries in different regions, namely Lebanon in West Asia, Kenya and Mauritius in Africa, and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia to develop national LDN targets. Four building blocks formed the basis for the LDN target setting process:

1. Leveraging LDN: To identify country-specific opportunities and mobilize a wide range of stakeholders and sectors for LDN target setting and implementation;
2. Assessing LDN: To establish a baseline on the state of land degradation and assess the legal and institutional framework for sustainable land management and restoration;
3. Setting LDN Targets: To define national and sub-national targets to achieve LDN by 2030; and
4. Achieving LDN: To identify transformative projects/programs and potential financing to achieve the agreed LDN targets.

The LDN targets were successfully established in Kenya, Lebanon and Kyrgyzstan, while Mauritius is expected to finalize its targets in 2018. The Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Ms Monique Barbut, travelled to Lebanon to launch the LDN targets under the patronage of the Prime Minister and met with the President to kick-start the LDN implementation phase.



The good practices and lessons learnt from the LDN target setting exercise were shared with UNCCD country parties during a side event at COP13 - “Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality: Setting the Stage for Implementation” - organized by GC-RED in partnership with the GM and the governments of China, Kenya and Lebanon. The event showcased the establishment of LDN targets under different policy, institutional and socio-ecological environments. Over 65 people from 21 countries participated in the event, leading to stimulating discussions on the constraints of the LDN approach and the opportunities for its implementation on the ground.

GENDER ACTION PLAN

In response to persistent calls from UNCCD Parties to better mainstream gender considerations and women’s empowerment in the implementation of the Convention, COP13 adopted a Gender Action Plan (GAP) to support a gender-responsive implementation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework.

Over the past 3 years, GC-RED invested significant efforts to advance the gender agenda of the Convention. In 2015, GC-RED published a series of thematic papers to propose strategic actions in the policy, institutional and capacity spheres to reduce gender inequalities in the drylands with respect to land rights, governance and resilience. These papers served to inform the policy dialogue on promoting gender equality and women empowerment in UNCCD/LDN implementation, culminating in the adoption of the GAP.





In partnership with the UNCCD and UN Women, GC-RED supported Parties' efforts leading to this milestone decision through: a) Organization of a pre-COP capacity building workshop on "Gender Mainstreaming in the Implementation of the UNCCD"; b) Facilitation of the COP13 Gender Day under the theme "Care about DLDD? Make Gender your Agenda"; and c) Provision of substantive feedback on the proposed GAP document.

GC-RED is currently exploring, with the UNCCD and UN Women, the possibility of launching a global initiative to "Catalyze the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan of the Convention". The purpose is to support a gender-responsive implementation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework. More specifically, this initiative aims to support countries achieve the priorities of the GAP, namely: 1) Enhancing women's participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives to implement the Convention; 2) Strengthening women's economic empowerment through activities to eradicate poverty; 3) Strengthening women's land rights and access to resources; and 4) Enhancing women's access to improved knowledge and technologies for effective UNCCD implementation.



Up-close: Building Capacity for Gender Mainstreaming



In partnership with UNCCD and UN Women, GC-RED supported the organization of a two-day gender training workshop on 4-5 September in Ordos, China. The objective was to build the gender expertise of COP 13 delegates to enable them to address gender inequalities that undermine the effective implementation of the Convention and the achievement of land degradation neutrality. The delegates were also trained on the integration of gender considerations in decisions adopted by the Convention, with special attention on the proposed Gender Action Plan. The workshop provided a forum to discuss this plan and build consensus for its adoption by the Conference of the Parties.



II. ECOSYSTEMS AND LIVELIHOODS RESILIENCE



ENHANCING RESILIENCE THINKING AT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS



The Centre developed the conceptual framework that will guide its global work on social and ecological resilience in 2017-2020, "Building Resilience Capacities of Communities in Drylands and Fragile Ecosystems." The goal of this framework is to build the resilience of communities in drylands and other fragile ecosystems to shocks and stresses from climate-related weather events, as well as conflict. Its objective is to contribute to increased capacities of communities to protect development gains and achieve improved wellbeing outcomes in the face of shocks and stresses from climate-induced extreme weather events and conflict. This will be achieved through the promotion of resilient development solutions for such communities through: 1) Nurturing inclusive and sustainable livelihoods; and 2) Supporting the sustainable management and use of land and water.

GC-RED places special focus on the inter-linkages between social and ecological resilience. This two-tiered approach is based on the fact that the majority of the populations in drylands and other fragile ecosystems are heavily dependent on ecological and environmental resources for their livelihoods. The intervention logic of the Centre is that by supporting and facilitating communities to invest in improving the management and use of land and water resources, and enhancing their economic/livelihoods opportunities, the community's social and ecological resilience will be strengthened in terms of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. The expectation is that this work will contribute significantly to the following SDG targets:

- Target 1.5 on building the socioeconomic and environmental resilience of the poor;
- Target 2.4 on ensuring sustainable food production systems;
- Target 6.4 on increasing water use efficiency;
- Target 3.1 on strengthening adaptive capacities to climate-related hazards; and
- Target 15.3 on achieving land degradation neutrality.

The conceptual framework including its objective, areas of work (pillars) and indicative activities is illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 1: Objective, Pillars and Indicative Activities of the GC-RED Conceptual Framework on Resilience Building



Throughout the year, GC-RED contributed to the development of corporate resilience thinking and practice. The Centre contributed to the process of refining and finalizing the UNDP policy on resilient recovery and development. Furthermore, it assisted in developing the free trilingual Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), entitled "Introduction to Resilience for Development." It is a partnership effort among SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Center (SRC), the Convention on Biological Diversity, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Pronatura, the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) Forum, the Nature Conservancy and UNDP.

The main e-lessons of the MOOC, which highlight years of the Centre's dedicated support towards resilience mainstreaming at national and local levels through the Community Based Resilience Analysis (CoBRA) tool, were launched during the Resilience 2017 conference organized by SRC on 20-23 August 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden. As part of the MOOC, the Centre participated in the [Webinar series](#) as a resource institution together with UNDP Malawi Country Office.



The CoBRA assessment experience in Malawi in 2016-2017 was presented and the process of feeding CoBRA results into national policy and programme implementation was shared with over 1,200 course attendees from all over the world.

SUPPORTING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AND RESTORE RESILIENCE



In Africa, GC-RED supported the initiative "Implementing Urgent Adaptation Priorities through Strengthened Decentralised and National Development Plans (ADAPT PLAN)" in Malawi, by facilitating the implementation of the CoBRA assessment in three districts i.e. Nkhata Bay, Ntcheu and Zomba, during the first quarter of 2017. Building on priority interventions selected through consultation with over 100 communities, District Action Plans have been developed to ensure that local planning and budgeting processes address local resilience-building needs and aspirations. The results of the CoBRA assessments in 2016 and 2017 informed the government's ongoing resilience planning efforts and were integrated into the various pillars of Malawi National Resilience Strategy, currently under finalization.

GC-RED participated in the fourth UNDP Africa Community of Practice on Disaster Risk Reduction, Recovery and Resilience Building, organized by the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa held in Dakar, Senegal, on 29 November - 1 December 2017. The Centre's mandate in social and ecological resilience building, as well as its recent technical/policy support and work in different countries in Africa were presented, and propositions were made to leverage the Centre's expertise in support of UNDP's resilience work at national and local levels in 2018 and beyond.

In the Arab States, the Centre pursued its support for the implementation of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Syria and Lebanon. More specifically, the Centre supported the implementation of the National Response Plan in Lebanon and UNDP's response plan in Syria. The objective of this support is to build the resilience of affected communities to the shocks and stresses resulting from the conflict. Technical assistance was provided for the implementation of initiatives that promote: a) inclusive and sustainable livelihoods; and b) sustainable management of land and water resources. The ability of these communities – who rely heavily on land for their livelihoods – to overcome the destabilizing effects of the conflict depends largely on securing income and producing food to cover their basic needs.



Badira Initiative for the Empowerment of Small Farmers (Syria)

The Centre pursued its support to UNDP-Syria to implement this intervention in Al-Hassakeh Governorate, with the objective of making fresh vegetables available on the local market at affordable prices. About 750 small farmers affected by the conflict were provided with inputs including seeds, fertilizer, pesticide and farming tools to produce vegetables and keep them in business. A total of 2,240 hectares were put into production, about 4,000 seasonal work-days were secured, mostly for women, and 45 job opportunities were maintained/created in the private sector.



Strengthening Capacities of Women Agri-Food Cooperatives (Lebanon)

The Centre's assistance was channelled within the framework of the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme to build the production and marketing capacities of women agri-food cooperatives in communities hosting Syrian refugees. A total of 33 cooperatives were supported in the Bekaa Valley and South Lebanon; about 350 families or 2,000 beneficiaries profited from this support. The rationale was to contribute to increased capacities to protect development gains and achieve improved wellbeing outcomes in the face of the socio-economic stresses resulting from the crisis.



These initiatives helped build the resilience of vulnerable groups to the shocks and stresses resulting from the conflict. By supporting affected groups, particularly women-headed households, to generate income and enhance food security, GC-RED provided critical assistance for mitigating the effects of the conflict. The activities in Syria and Lebanon were completed in June 2017; GC-RED is exploring with the UNDP country offices new avenues for pursuing this support in 2018.

III. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND NETWORKING

Throughout 2017, dedicated efforts were made to improve the visibility of GC-RED and its activities among targeted internal and external audiences. The Centre's website on [Sustainable Land Management and Restoration](#) was the main channel used to disseminate progress on its policy and programme support initiatives.

A number of flagship publications were developed by the Centre and disseminated through the corporate website and other channels. They received positive reviews and reactions, as demonstrated through high audience ratings on respective UNDP Publication pages. The full list of relevant GC-RED publications is presented below in the Key Publications Section.

GC-RED led UNDP's outreach and communications work for UNCCD/COP13 to promote the organization's contribution to the implementation of the Convention and sustainable land management and restoration across the world.



The exhibition booth, equipped with story-telling picture panels and relevant UNDP publications, was visited by many delegates attending the conference. Moreover, GC-RED co-organized and attended a number of events and highlighted UNDP's contribution to SDG15 on terrestrial ecosystems and other related goals including poverty eradication, food security, gender equality, water, and climate change. The GC-RED Director delivered UNDP's statement at the COP13 Opening Session.

Other key knowledge management and networking efforts include:



- Periodic review, renewal and distribution of the Centre's knowledge materials, such as the brochure, thematic factsheets, etc. in both print ready and digital formats;
- Face-to-face and virtual presentations on GC-RED's key activities at various fora and posting of articles concerning the Centre work at UNDP's web blog page and its partner sites;
- Timely dissemination of the Centre activities and achievements through social media network (As of December 2017, [GC-RED twitter account](#) had more than 1,500 followers, reaching out to over 10,000 people/institutions per month on average); and
- Monthly dissemination of climatic/drought resilience related news to some 2,000 interested partners through the [Africa-Asia Drought Risk Management Peer Assistance Network \(AADP\) newsletters](#) (As of December 2017, the AADP newsletter remained highly rated - 4.5/5.0 stars - on the UNDP publication site).



As part of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, the GC-RED team also worked successfully to represent UNDP in a number of strategic events all over the world in 2017. Some of these events include:

- Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) Global Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on 21-23 February
- 5th Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-5) in Bonn, Germany, on 7-10 March
- Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) Ministerial Conference 2017 in Berlin, Germany, on 27-28 March
- PEI Donor Steering Group Meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, on 9-11 May
- 22nd Poverty Environment Partnership meeting and PEI Technical Advisory Group meeting in New York, the United States, on 19-21 June
- Africa Preparatory Meeting for UNCCD/COP13 in Nairobi, Kenya, on 24-28 July
- Visit of the UNCCD Executive Secretary to Lebanon on 25-27 July 2017
- GLO Steering Committee meeting in Ordos, China, on 9 September 2017
- 3rd Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on 4-6 December 2017

This section provides the overview of progress made by the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net), with focus on the project's three inter-linked activity areas: 1) BES-Net Trialogue; 2) National ecosystems assessments; and 3) BES-Net web portal and other online communication/matchmaking works.

BES-NET TRIALOGUE

"Triologue" is BES-Net's multi-stakeholder dialogue and face-to-face capacity building activity, which aims at supporting the uptake of the completed thematic IPBES assessments across sectors and the communities of science, policy and practice. Following the launch of the [IPBES's Thematic Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production](#), the [First Regional Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development](#) was successfully held in



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 18-20 October 2017. This three-day event, hosted by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism as the IPBES Focal Point, brought together some 60 participants, encompassing about 40 stakeholders from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Montenegro representing all three BES-Net communities of local farmers and bee-keepers, scientists and policymakers, as well as regional and international resource people.



Ahead of the event, in accordance with the prior-developed comprehensive Trialogue methodology, a [Background Document](#), making IPBES assessment findings accessible and relevant to the regional context, was prepared in close partnership with key resource persons. During the Trialogue, participants jointly assessed further the status of pollinators in the region, including their socio-economic and ecological values, drivers of changes in pollinator populations and diversity and their impacts on agriculture, the agri-business and rural development, among other fields. The discussions also focused on the response options on how to address the challenges and maximize the important co-benefits of sustainable management and protection of pollinators and their habitats.

The [Action Document](#) has been jointly produced based on these productive Trialogue sessions. It elaborates a set of concrete actions to be implemented in tandem by three sectoral communities at different levels to better address issues concerning pollinators, food production and rural development in the region. Some participants have already initiated the actions, for instance, by organizing a follow up national forum and generating more in-depth national/sub-national pollination status reports (Moldova), and presenting the outputs of and messages from the Trialogue event on the local TV station (Albania).

The Trialogue event was well recorded and its progress, key discussion points and outputs were disseminated constantly and widely through BES-Net's web and other social media channels. As a result of these efforts, for example, BES-Net's twitter account received a remarkable level of impressions at around 180,000 in the months of October and November 2017.



The BES-Net Triologues aim to address the current problem of the weak interface between science/traditional knowledge, policy and practice. Experience has shown that scientific reports and one-way transfer of information alone neither strengthen capacity nor lead to inclusive and effective decision-making. The Triologue, therefore, provides a constructive space to learn together, fostering inter-cultural understanding and inter-institutional coordination so that multiple stakeholders can: i) jointly frame the problems around biodiversity/ecosystem issues of common concern; ii) generate innovative solutions; iii) identify policy options within a given context, and iv) generate a commitment to concerted action.



Various innovative tools and approaches were applied during the First Regional Triologue held in Sarajevo to ensure the quality of the interaction and cross-fertilization among all three communities of science, policy and practice. In order to overcome knowledge, cultural, language and other barriers, for example, the event programme was carefully set with a mixture of plenary and group sessions and field visits. Creative visual stimuli and materials were highly helpful to give time for critical reflection and allow for everyone's participation. Local pollination-dependent ingredients were also utilized for the meals served during the event which helped evoke the specific theme of the Triologue, i.e. pollinator and pollination.

NATIONAL ECOSYSTEMS ASSESSMENTS

The BES-Net project, in partnership with the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), is commissioned to support in developing capacities of selected countries, i.e. Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam, to conduct national assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services so as to complement the global assessments being undertaken by IPBES. The [Global Inception and Capacity Building Workshop](#) was held in Kribi, Cameroon, on 13-15 June 2017, bringing together representatives from governments, development partner organizations and science/academic fields in four target countries. A variety of tools and data were introduced in support of scoping for respective national assessments.

For all four countries, sub-contracting arrangements were put in place by WCMC with national partners to implement the agreed assessment work plans. The first national workshops have subsequently been carried out in each country to engage stakeholders, set up the national expert leadership groups comprising scientist, policymakers and practitioners, and refine further the scopes of the assessments. During the discussions, various types and areas of priority national capacity building needs were also identified. The BES-Net team and WCMC will provide the national expert leadership groups and other relevant stakeholders in the four countries with technical support to address these priority needs through the organization of national Triologues, the design of webinar series and online forums to share lessons and experience, etc., for each country over the coming years.



BES-NET WEB PORTAL AND OTHER ONLINE COMMUNICATION/MATCHMAKING WORKS

Following its official launch in December 2016, the [BES-Net web portal](#) has been serving as the main medium through which to disseminate most updated news and information on five IPBES assessment thematic areas, namely:

- Biodiversity finance;
- Ecosystem-based adaptation;
- Indigenous and Local Knowledge in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;
- Land Degradation and Restoration; and
- Pollination, Pollinators and Food Production

The web portal provides a rich database of organizations and experts working in these thematic areas. It also contains a comprehensive library of policy briefs, methodological tools and learning materials developed and shared by IPBES, BES-Net partners and other relevant entities. During the course of 2017, over 700 new resources were contributed to the library in different thematic areas.

The web portal is also utilized as key interface where stakeholders with common interests interact and promote dialogues around specific thematic issues. A dedicated discussion group was created, for example, to assist the participants of the First Regional Triologue in continuing proactive exchanges of information, experiences and ideas concerning the implementation of the Action Document on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development at national and regional levels. Efforts are underway to create similar communication platforms for national ecosystem assessment partner teams in four countries.

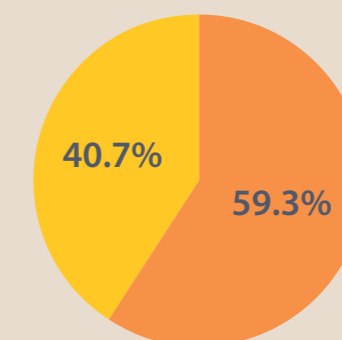
Furthermore, BES-Net users are increasingly benefiting from the network's matchmaking support. They are regularly informed of job/internship vacancies from partners posted on the web portal and BES-Net social media tools and are able to freely communicate with the registered experts for various work and collaboration opportunities. Key updates and opportunities shared by the partners are circulated widely to over 4,000 people through BES-Net's bi-monthly newsletters.



During the period covered in this report, BES-Net continued to grow. The number of BES-Net's official Network Partners has increased by 12 percent to 91 entities.

BES-Net web portal's overall online presence has also been increasing remarkably. The web-portal recorded more than 55,000 page views for 2017, with a reasonable balance between new visitors (59 percent) and returning visitors (41 percent). As of 31 December 2017, the registered users for the BES-Net Web Portal reached 630 from all three target communities of policymakers, scientists/ knowledge holders and practitioners. This is over 130 percent increase from the same period in 2016. Among them, 116 experts volunteered to serve as BES-Net experts based on their knowledge, experiences and expertise, in support for providing policy advice, respond to practitioner questions and moderate forums on the web portal.

- New BES-Net Web Portal Visitors
- Returning Visitor



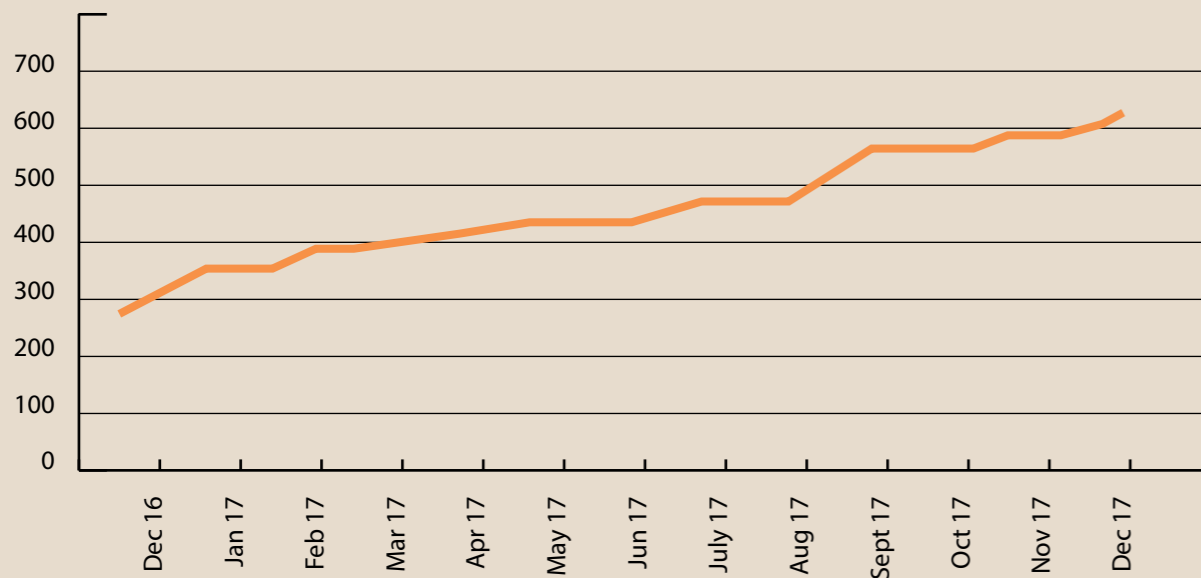
UNDP CO-MANAGEMENT OF THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE (PEI)

Up-close: Status of BES-Net at a Glance [continued]



BES-Net's social media efforts through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube have also gained an enormous amount of exposure for the project. Its [Facebook page](#) is followed by some 4,500 people and the [Twitter account](#) has been receiving over 3,700 profiles visits, earning a total of close to half a million impressions in 2017 and receiving an average of 1.5 likes to the tweets per day. Furthermore, six bi-monthly e-Newsletters were distributed in 2017 to keep partners and other interested stakeholders informed of BES-Net and other relevant activities.

Number of Registered BES-Net Web Portal Users



Since October 2014, GC-RED has provided UNDP Managing Agent functions for PEI. PEI is a joint UNDP-UN Environment programme supporting country-led efforts to integrate poverty-environment (P-E) linkages into national and subnational development policy, planning, budgeting and monitoring frameworks. The global programme is implemented through joint UNDP-UN Environment teams covering four regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean), working in close collaboration with UNDP Regional Hubs in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Istanbul and Panama City. Joint Programme activities for the current phase will be concluded by 30 June 2018.



In 2017, the Centre's Director and Centre staff continued to provide the Poverty Environment Facility (PEF) and PEI with strategic guidance, project management and operational support. The Centre also increasingly supported PEI in strengthening delivery on the poverty-environment nexus through the four regional teams, facilitated global advocacy – reflected through the facilitation of the EMG Nexus dialogue, and the application of tools for mainstreaming P-E issues in development policies, planning, budgeting and monitoring frameworks. Support also included management of on-going PEI cash flow management; project delivery reporting; mitigation, preparation, approval, implementation and monitoring of 2017 work plans and budgets; donor reporting and tranche disbursement facilitation as well as administration of mobilized European Union Pillar Assessed Grant or Delegation Agreement (PAGODA I) funds.

In addition to the PEI related global strategic meetings, the Centre provided substantive inputs into the following PEI regional and technical meetings:

- Joint mission of co-Directors to New York in June 2017
- UN General Assembly/UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High Level Political Forum, 13-19 July 2017 (New York, USA)
- PEI ECIS Regional Experts Meeting, 24-26 October 2017 (Istanbul, Turkey)
- Asia – Pacific Regional Workshop, 22-23 November 2017 (Bangkok, Thailand)
- UNEA-3, 4-6 December 2017 (Nairobi, Kenya)

As part of administering UNDP's Managing Agent functions, the Centre:

- In close collaboration with the headquarters, managed all direct cost sharing agreement funding and facilitated the pooling and receipt of PEI resources under the global PEI ATLAS Project/Award for a total of more than USD 7.15M
- Delivered financial reporting for donor specific requests, UNEP requirements and overall Global Programme Annual Reporting
- Recruited consultancies for PEI activities and provided additional operational support as needed
- Contributed to the 2016 PEI Annual Report.



KEY PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED BY THE GC-RED IN 2017

- UNDP (2017). [Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality for People and Planet](#)
- UNDP (2017). [CoBRA Implementation Guidelines: Version 2](#)
- UNDP (2017). [Programme of Catalytic Support to Implement the Convention to Combat Desertification in West Asia and North Africa - Phase V Final Report](#)
- UNDP (2017). [BES-Net Dialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development: Background Document](#)
- UNDP (2017). [BES-Net Dialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development: Action Document on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development, Eastern Europe](#)



KEY PUBLICATIONS GC-RED PEER-REVIEWED/ CONTRIBUTED TO IN 2017

- UNDP (2016). [Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone](#)
- UNDP-UN Environment (2016). [PEI Blossom Time](#)
- UNDP-UN Environment (2017). [PEI Poverty Environment Mainstreaming Online Handbook](#)
- UNDP-UN Environment (2017). [PEI Accelerating Sustainable Development in Africa](#)
- UNDP-UN Environment (2017). [PEI Poverty-Environmental Accounting Framework](#)
- UNCCD (2017). [Global Land Outlook: First Edition](#)
- UNDP (Forthcoming). [Human Development Report 2017](#)
- IPBES (Forthcoming). [Thematic Assessment of land Degradation and Restoration](#)



In 2017, the Centre implemented a total portfolio of USD 8.25 million delivered under three separate projects (i.e. PEI; IDDP; GC-RED). The largest individual project portfolio continued to be the PEI with USD 6.2 million, followed by GC-RED and IDDP.

All funds implemented were non-core project resources. Except for the Director, all staff members were project funded by end-2017. The Centre's operations were also supported through project resources.

In 2017, more than USD 7.2 million in non-core resources were received in support of the various initiatives implemented under the purview of the Centre. The Centre expects to have a portfolio of more than USD 23 million for the implementation of its initiatives (GC-RED, BES-Net and PEI/PEAS) over the next 3 years. Efforts are underway to mobilize additional resources for the Centre's land and resilience-related work.

More details are provided in the tables below.

Table 1: 2017 Delivery (as of January 2018)

Project Name	ATLAS Project Output No	2017 Budget in USD	2017 Expenditure in USD	Source of funds
PEI	75132	7,457,519	6,260,000	Non-core
IDDP	60784	393,978	378,169	Non-core
GC-RED	87434	619,670	579,167	UNSO Trust Fund
	94130	236,590	236,590	UNDP core allocation for Centre staff costs
	97675	1,010,114	795,756	Non-core (BES-NET Project)
Sub-Total		1,866,374	1,611,513	
Total		9,717,871	8,249,682	

Table 2: Non-core resources received in 2017 (as of January 2018)

Project Name	Amount in USD	Donor
PEI	4,490,950	EU
	978,939	UNEP (Sweden)
	1,714,108	UNEP (Norway)
Sub-Total	7,183,997	
BES-Net	56,761	Sweden (Swedbio)
Sub-Total	56,761	
Total	7,240,758	

Table 3: Non-core resources for utilization in 2018 -2020 (as of Jan 2018)

Project Name	Available Amount in USD	Pledged Amount in USD	Donor
PEI	2,840,000	200,000	UNEP
	1,580,000	238,949	EU
	130,000	0	Balance Phase I
PEAS	0	10,513,740	EU
	0	2,850,000	UNEP
Sub-Total	4,550,000	13,802,688	
Centre	1,173,492	0	UNDP
	0	137,395	Germany (GIZ)
Sub-Total	1,173,492	137,395	
BES-Net	3,869,302	0	Germany (IKI)
	55,345	56,761	Sweden (Swedbio)
Sub-Total	3,924,647	56,761	
Total	9,648,139	13,996,845	
Grand Total	23,644,984		

GC-RED is ready to support the implementation of the new UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 (SP). The alignment of the Centre's activities with the SP is captured in its 2018 workplan. Building on its mandate, activities and project resources (LDN/Resilience, BES-NET, PEI and PEAS), the Centre will contribute to the three SP outcomes, namely: Outcome 1 – Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions; Outcome 2 – Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development; and Outcome 3 – Build resilience to shocks and crisis. Specifically, the Centre's activities will feed into the achievement of the following SP Outputs: 1.1.1 (Mainstreaming 2030 Agenda); 1.4.1 (Scaling-up Natural Resource Management [NRM] Solutions); 2.4.1 (NRM Policies and Institutions); 3.1.1 (Crisis Recovery); and 3.3.1 (Resilience Preparedness).

The Centre will scale-up its support to global, regional and national efforts on Land Degradation Neutrality. Activities will be delivered in collaboration with the Centre's key partners namely the UNCCD, IUCN, UN Women, PBL and ELD. This support is designed to accelerate LDN implementation in order to strengthen resilience and overall progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The Centre will contribute to the preparation of the second edition of the Global Land Outlook; it will support efforts to halt and reverse land degradation in target countries; and will facilitate the rollout of the newly approved Gender Action Plan of the UNCCD. This set of activities will contribute to the achievement of SP Outputs 1.4.1 and 2.4.1.

The Centre will continue its work on social and ecological resilience. It will support the implementation of the UNCCD Drought Initiative through concrete actions on drought preparedness to boost the resilience of communities and ecosystems in selected countries. This includes the preparation of a guidance note on "Mainstreaming Gender into the UNCCD Drought Initiative", in collaboration with UN Women. The Centre will pursue its support to the implementation of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Syria and Lebanon. It will provide substantive input to finalize the UNDP Resilience Strategy and technical support in resilience assessment, planning and programming in selected countries in Africa. These activities will feed into SP Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.3.1.

The Centre will keep strengthening and expanding BES-Net by linking its offline and online activities in an integrated and coordinated manner. Building on the successful organization of the first regional Trialogue in Eastern Europe, a new round regional of Trialogues is being planned, to promote the uptake of the thematic IPBES assessments in different regions across the communities of scientists, policymakers and practitioners. The BES-Net team will work closely with WCMC to provide the necessary technical support for the national biodiversity and ecosystem services assessment processes in Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Viet Nam. The BES-Net web portal and social media channels will be proactively utilized to disseminate the above and other relevant thematic resources, and enhance interactions and dialogues among the three communities of policy, science and practice. The BES-Net project will support the achievement of SP Outputs 1.1.1 and 2.4.1.

Building on the legacy from PEI, 2018 will be a year of transition with PEI closing at the end of 2018. PEI developed a new project proposal in 2017, which was approved at the 2017 PEI Donor Steering Group meeting in July. At UNEA-3, the UNDP Associate Administrator and the UN Environment Executive Director reaffirmed their commitment to a continued joint partnership, including a new joint project managed under the mandate of the Centre. In 2018, with 8.8M Euro resources jointly mobilized from the EU, the new 4-year joint project (PEAS Goals, 2018-2022) will be initiated to serve as a joint UNDP-UN Environment project for equitable and pro-poor sustainable development in least developed countries (LDCs). PEAS aims to mobilize governments of LDCs to create coherent policies and shift the emphasis of poverty-environment mainstreaming towards guiding quality investments that improve environmental sustainability and climate resilience for poverty eradication. Both PEI and PEAS will support the achievement of SP Output 1.4.1.



we focus on

poverty eradication and environmental sustainability in fragile ecosystems.



we support

sustainable and resilient development in drylands and other fragile ecosystems, aiming to reduce vulnerability and ensure better living standards.



we contribute to

the implementation of the SDGs, which will result in improved livelihoods and socio-economic wellbeing, and ultimately lead to pro poor growth.



we mainstream

poverty-environment objectives into national/local development and budgetary frameworks to promote poverty eradication, while advancing sustainable management of natural capital.



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