

Concept Note:

Global Dialogue Forum, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, December 2024

Background

The upcoming Global Dialogue Forum will be held at UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 3rd to 13th December 2024. It will build upon the achievements and insights gained from the previous Global Dialogue Forum held in South Africa in November 2023 and a series of in-person events: Partners4change in Nairobi, Capacity Accelerator Network (CAN) learning workshop in Ghana, Regional Dialogue Forum in Senegal and online support sessions. As part of this ongoing series of events facilitated by the Group on Earth Observations' Land Degradation Neutrality Flagship (GEO-LDN) it focusses on support for participating countries to:

- Define specific use cases by identifying clear problem statements.
- Develop roadmaps to tackle the identified problems and to break down the implementation into manageable steps.
- Receive support in accessing, using, and interpreting geodata to inform their roadmaps.
- Provide feedback on existing tools, data, and algorithms to guide further development of the LDN Toolbox
- Exchange ideas and strategies with peer countries
- Offer recommendations to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
- Access capacity development and advisory services from the global Earth Observation (EO) community.

Additionally, the first GEO-LDN helpdesk, hosted at the **Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)**, is available to provide technical assistance to participating countries.

Target Group

The target participants of the Global and Regional Dialogue Forums are inter-sectoral country teams responsible for either reporting on LDN/SDG 15.3.1 or implementing LDN through integrated land use planning. These teams were selected through an open and transparent process, ensuring that the countries attending the forum have been actively engaged in their roadmap development, regularly communicated their progress with GEO-LDN, and sought further assistance as needed from GEO-LDN and its Working Group 4.

Elements of the Riyadh Global Dialog Forum 2024

The Global Dialog Forum will take place in the GEO-LDN pavilion between the Blue and the Green Zone at UNCCD COP16. The pavilion serves as a space for continued dialog within the country teams, between teams from different countries, between countries and Earth observations experts, and between countries and COP delegates and participants. The elements are:

- **Changing exhibition** in the GEO-LDN pavilion: Countries will exhibit posters on their progress made in using Earth observations for achieving land degradation neutrality
- **Continued dialog and new connections:** Country teams and Earth observation experts from the GEO-LDN network will be available during the two weeks for informal dialog and scheduled meetings to deepen and to widen their network and knowledge exchange
- **Demos and Trainings** based on countries' identified needs will be held throughout the duration of the Global Dialogue Forum in English, French and Spanish
- Storytelling workshop and dialog on 7th December 2024
 - o Countries will share their use case and receive advice on how to engage an audience through the method of storytelling
 - o During this day the countries will internalize how to structure their 2025 roadmap along the concept of storytelling, answering key questions:
 - Who are the actors, is there someone missing in the intersectoral team?
 - What are milestones and challenges in the storyline?
- **Presentations** – in the blue and green zone, including Science stage and GEO-LDN pavilion, thereby increasing the visibility of the countries and feeding their experiences into the negotiation process of the COP.

Objectives

The objectives of the dialogue formats are threefold:

1. **Support for implementation of the identified use case:** Assist countries in achieving their roadmap targets by enhancing access to geodata, tools, and algorithms for evidence-based decision-making. This will contribute to progress towards or beyond Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), thus improving life on land. The support will focus on three key areas:
 - o **Monitoring and reporting for SDG 15.3.1:** Assisting countries in tracking their progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 15.3.1, aligned with UNCCD methods and targets.
 - o **Implementation of LDN at (sub-) national levels:** Enhancing the integration of geospatial data into national and subnational land use planning to achieve LDN.
 - o **Build bridges between reporting and implementation:** Ensure that the institutions involved in monitoring and reporting know about land use planning and/or restoration efforts in their country and vice versa.

2. **Feedback on geodata, tools and capacity development:** Gather feedback from country teams to further enhance the LDN toolbox based on their practical experiences and needs following the “Design with People” principle explained in the “Principles for Digital Development”.
3. **Amplify country efforts and voices:** Increase the visibility of countries' initiatives and challenges using geospatial data for LDN. This includes extracting recommendations to amplify their voices in the UNCCD reporting process, particularly for future reporting periods.

Expected Outcomes for the Global Dialogue Forum in Riyadh 2024, Saudi Arabia

The Riyadh Forum will build on the progress from the ongoing series of events (cf. background) and is expected to yield the following outcomes:

- **Adoption of a storytelling approach:** Participants will emphasize storytelling as a method to communicate their use cases and projects. This will involve narrating the problem statement, proposed solutions, the specific use of EO, and the contribution of EO to people, land, and country development. The storytelling method can help to communicate the operational steps in the roadmap to decision makers, potential funders etc...
- **Amending the roadmaps for 2025 and beyond:**
 - Identify and address any gaps in the 2024 roadmap.
 - Illustrate and highlight challenges encountered and adapting adequately.
 - Use these lessons learnt for continuous improvement and strategic adjustments for future initiatives.

The added value of the storytelling framework is to engage the target audience in a clearer, more compelling manner, communicating how EO has contributed to land degradation neutrality and to track ongoing progress in achieving LDN goals.

More Information

For further details, visit the **GEO-LDN website**: <https://geo-ldn.org>