



Conference of the Parties
Committee on Science and Technology
Sixteenth session
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 3–12 December 2024
Item 1 (a) of the provisional agenda
Organizational matters
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Provisional agenda and annotations

Note by the secretariat

I. Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work;
 - (b) Election of officers other than the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology.
2. Items resulting from the work programme of the Science–Policy Interface for the triennium 2022–2024:
 - (a) Evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and drought;
 - (b) Evidence on historical global and regional aridity trends and future projections that may contribute to expanding drylands and affected populations and the adaptation approaches;
 - (c) Coordination activities of the Science–Policy Interface with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies.
3. Review of the work conducted by the Science–Policy Interface.
4. Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge:
 - (a) Interfacing science and policy, knowledge sharing and technology transfer;
 - (b) Work programme of the Science–Policy Interface beyond 2024;
 - (c) Information on modalities for reporting on the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework.
5. Innovation and Technology in Ecologically Sustainable Agrifood Systems.
6. Procedural matters: Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology.



II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Dates and venue of the session

1. Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) shall meet in conjunction with the ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP). The sixteenth session of the CST (CST 16) will therefore be convened from 3–12 December 2024 in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16). The CST is tentatively scheduled to meet on 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12 December 2024.

Participants

2. Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that the CST shall be multidisciplinary and open to the participation of all Parties. Consistent with the provisions of article 22, paragraph 7, it is anticipated that the meetings of CST 16 will be open to observers, subject to the rules of procedure.

Documentation

3. Documents relevant to the session will be made available on the website of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).¹

1. Organizational matters

Opening of the session

4. CST 16 will be opened by the Chair of the CST, who was elected at COP 15.² In accordance with decision 25/COP.10, paragraph 1, which amended rule 22 of the rules of procedure (contained in decision 1/COP.1), the Chair of CST shall be elected at the final meeting of the COP and assume office immediately.

(a) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

5. According to the terms of reference of the CST, as set out in the decision 15/COP.1, and along with other relevant decisions of the COP, including decisions 1/COP.1, 16/COP.1, 12/COP.15, 20/COP.15, 21/COP.15 and 33/COP.15, the secretariat has prepared, in consultation with the Chair of the CST, a provisional agenda for the Committee's session. A tentative schedule of work for the session is contained in the annex to this document.

Purpose of the session

6. In accordance with article 24, paragraph 1, of the Convention, the CST is tasked with providing the COP with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

7. Following the establishment of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) by decision 23/COP.11, the extension of its mandate by decision 19/COP.12 and decision 19/COP.13, and in accordance with decisions 18/COP.15 and 21/COP.15, this session will be organized in such a way as to facilitate thematic dialogue between Parties and the SPI regarding the policy implication of the scientific outputs, and to enable the formulation of concise policy-relevant recommendations. Organization of work for the session is intended to facilitate such activities with a view to formulating draft decisions, where necessary, for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/official-documents>.

² ICCD/COP(15)/23, paragraph 16.

Organization of work

8. The CST may wish to consider the following scenario: at the opening session on 3 December 2024, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD and the Chair of the CST will make introductory statements.

9. Following the introduction of each agenda item, representatives of regional and interest groups will be invited to make statements followed by statements from United Nations agencies and/or other stakeholders, including civil society.

10. By its decision 33/COP.15, the COP requested the secretariat to circulate, in all official languages, at least six weeks prior to the COP, a single document with all draft decisions prepared for Parties, for consideration at the COP. Accordingly, it is proposed to establish a CST contact group to start the CST discussions and further negotiate based on document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, which includes all substantive draft CST decisions proposed by the secretariat.

11. It should be noted that a plenary meeting will be held jointly with the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) on “improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties” and is tentatively scheduled to take place on 4 December 2024. In line with past practice, the relevant draft decision with the same title as the agenda item will therefore also be negotiated jointly with the CRIC at a time to be announced in session.

12. During its concluding meeting on 12 December 2024, and following the completion of the substantive and procedural agenda items, the CST will adopt its report, including, where necessary, the draft decisions for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP. Finally, the Chair of the CST will call for the election of officers other than the Chair of the CST.

Times of meetings

13. The tentative schedule of work aims to make best use of the facilities available during normal working hours. Consistent with the working hours of the COP and to avoid incurring overtime expenses, the normal working hours of the session will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

14. *Action:* The CST will be invited to adopt its agenda and schedule of work for the session.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/1 – Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat

(b) Election of officers other than the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology

15. *Background:* Pursuant to paragraph 2 of decision 25/COP.10, which amended rule 31 of the rules of procedure (contained in decision 1/COP.1), the Vice-Chairs of the CST shall be elected at the final meeting of the session of the CST held in conjunction with the sessions of the COP and shall assume their office immediately. The CST shall elect its own four Vice-Chairs, one of whom shall act as Rapporteur. The Chair and four Vice-Chairs of such subsidiary bodies shall be elected with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, while not neglecting affected country Parties in other regions. They shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

16. *Action:* The Chair of CST 16 shall call for the election of officers at the final meeting of CST 16. The Vice-Chairs elected, one of whom shall act as Rapporteur, shall assume their office immediately.

2. Items resulting from the work programme of the Science–Policy Interface for the triennium 2022–2024

17. *Background:* At its fifteenth session, the COP adopted the SPI work programme for the triennium 2022–2024, as contained in the annex to decision 18/COP.15. The work programme contained two major objectives and seven coordination activities.

18. By the same decision, the COP requested the Executive Secretary to present synthesis reports at CST 16, including policy-oriented recommendations for each objective included in the work programme of the SPI, as well as those resulting from its coordination activities during the triennium 2022–2024.

(a) Evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and drought

19. *Background:* Objective 1 of the SPI work programme 2022–2024 was to provide science-based evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and drought while also contributing to the achievement of multiple United Nations goals and targets, taking into account environmental, economic and sociocultural conditions.

20. The SPI conducted a thematic assessment in collaboration with commissioned experts working under its supervision. Based on this assessment, the SPI prepared a technical report entitled “Sustainable Land Use Systems – the path forward to collectively achieve Land Degradation Neutrality”. A synthesis is contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/2.

21. *Action:* The CST shall be invited to discuss the policy implications resulting from the outcomes of objective 1 of the SPI work programme for the triennium 2022–2024, review the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, and produce a final draft decision for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/2 – Policy-oriented recommendations resulting from evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and drought, under objective 1 of the Science-Policy Interface work programme for the triennium 2022–2024. Report by the Executive Secretary

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

(b) Evidence on historical global and regional aridity trends and future projections that may contribute to expanding drylands and affected populations and the adaptation approaches

22. *Background:* Objective 2 of the SPI work programme 2022–2024 was to provide science-based evidence on historical global and regional aridity trends and future projections that may contribute to expanding drylands and affected populations and the adaptation approaches that reduce risks to environmental, social and economic systems.

23. The SPI conducted a thematic assessment in collaboration with commissioned experts working under its supervision. Based on this assessment, the SPI prepared a technical report entitled “Provision of science-based evidence on the historical regional and global aridity trends and future projections”. A synthesis is contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/3.

24. *Action:* The CST will be invited to discuss the policy implications resulting from the outcomes of objective 2 of the SPI work programme for the triennium 2022–2024, review the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, and prepare a final draft decision for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/3 – Policy-oriented recommendations resulting from evidence on historical global and regional aridity trends and future projections, under objective 2 of the Science-Policy Interface work programme for the triennium 2022–2024. Report by the Executive Secretary

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

(c) Coordination activities of the Science–Policy Interface with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies

25. *Background:* By its decisions 23/COP.11 and 19/COP.13, the COP mandated the SPI to interact with multiple existing scientific mechanisms and, by its decision 19/COP.15, encouraged the SPI to continue fostering partnerships with scientific panels and bodies and institutions, international organizations, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders with a view to strengthening collaboration. The SPI work programme for 2022–2024 includes seven coordination activities with external scientific panels and bodies and the assumption by the SPI, as the most important objective, of a primary role in quality assurance for the third edition of the Global Land Outlook (GLO3).

26. The coordination activities undertaken by the SPI, as well as a summary of the key findings relevant to the UNCCD resulting from its analysis of the key messages emerging from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability³ and the IPCC's Sixth Assessment report on the mitigation of climate change⁴, are contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/4.

27. *Action:* The CST will be invited to review document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/4 as well as the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, and prepare a final draft decision for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/4 – Policy-oriented recommendations resulting from the cooperation with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies. Report by the Executive Secretary

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

3. Review of the work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface

28. *Background:* Following the first review of the SPI in 2017, by decision 19/COP.13 the COP decided that the SPI shall operate up to the end of COP 16, at which time a review of the SPI will be presented. By decision 21/COP.15, the COP further decided that CST 16 (in 2024) should focus on, inter alia, a review of the work conducted by the SPI, including its overall achievements since the last review completed at COP 13, in order to decide on the future functioning of the SPI.

29. Building on an external assessment of the SPI, inputs provided during the midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework and guidance from the CST Bureau, and the governance actions taken and their effects in facilitating SPI work in the triennium 2022–2024, the secretariat presents possible elements for the future functioning of the SPI in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/6, for the consideration of Parties under this agenda item.

³ Climate Change 2022: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-ii/>.

⁴ Climate Change 2022: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report on mitigation of climate change <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-3/>.

30. The same document contains information in follow up to decision 19/COP.15, by which the Parties requested the renewal of SPI membership and a revised SPI review process for the publications produced and supervised by the SPI while facilitating the SPI work in the triennium of 2022–2024, and the development of a gender policy and implementation plan for the SPI whereby gender is mainstreamed, and gender parity is progressively achieved.

31. *Action:* The CST will be invited to review document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/6 as well as the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, and prepare a final draft decision for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/6 – Review of the Science-Policy Interface and its achievements.
Note by the secretariat

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

4. Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge

(a) Interfacing science and policy, knowledge sharing and technology transfer

32. *Background:* By its decision 19/COP.15, operational paragraph 10, the Parties requested the secretariat to continue the expansion and further enhancement of science policy interfacing and knowledge sharing, as an integral part of the UNCCD website under the new Knowledge and Data section, to address the needs and priorities of country Parties in order to help disseminate relevant knowledge, data and technologies to all stakeholders. It also requested the secretariat to continue the development of the Drought Toolbox, the Sand and Dust Storms Toolbox and other knowledge tools.

33. Document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5 reports on activities and partnerships relating to science-policy interfacing, tools for sharing data, knowledge and technologies, the accessibility of best practices on sustainable land management, and the coherence and alignment among different approaches to integrating environmental management practices.

34. *Action:* The CST will be invited to consider the information contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5 as well as the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, and to produce a final draft decision for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5 – Interfacing science and policy, knowledge sharing and technology transfer. Note by the secretariat

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

(b) Work programme of the Science–Policy Interface beyond 2024

35. *Background:* By its decision 19/COP.13, paragraph 5, the COP requested the SPI to submit, through the secretariat, a proposal for its work programme at each regular session of the CST, with a focus on one or two broad, globally relevant priority topics related to desertification/land degradation and drought.

36. The SPI discussed a range of proposals for topics to be considered for inclusion in the SPI work programme beyond 2024, leading to a draft work programme taking into account the relevant recommendations for the future organization of science resulting from the independent review of the SPI and the Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought (IWG) report on the mid-term review of the implementation of the UNCCD Strategic Framework 2018–2030, which is contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/7.

37. *Action:* The CST will be invited to review document ICCD/COP(16)/CST/7 as well as the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10, and to prepare a draft decision for consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP with respect to the proposed work programme of the SPI beyond 2024.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/7 – Work programme for the Science-Policy Interface beyond 2024.
Note by the secretariat

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

(c) **Information on modalities for reporting on the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework**

38. *Background:* According to decision 15/COP.1, a function of the CST is to, inter alia, make recommendations regarding (i) the collection, analysis and exchange of data and information to ensure the systematic observation of land degradation in affected areas, and assess the processes and effects of drought and desertification; and (ii) pertinent, quantifiable and verifiable indicators which might be used in connection with action programmes.

39. By its decision 3/COP.8, the COP requested the CST to advise the CRIC on how best to measure progress on the strategic objectives. Also, by its decisions 16/COP.11 and 15/COP.13, the COP requested the collaboration of the CRIC and the CST on issues pertaining to monitoring. Furthermore, by its decision 11/COP.14, paragraph 6, the COP encouraged the two subsidiary bodies of the Convention to work with their Bureaux to continue collaborating effectively on topics related to methodology development for the reporting indicators. In this respect, document ICCD/CRIC(22)/7–ICCD/COP(16)/CST/8 details further proposals of how to improve the reporting process, also taking into consideration the work of the IWG on the mid-term evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 strategic framework.

40. A joint CRIC/CST plenary meeting on this agenda item is tentatively scheduled for 4 December 2024. It is foreseen that, based on the proposals contained in the report of CRIC 21 and in document ICCD/CRIC(22)/7–ICCD/COP(16)/CST/8, an interactive dialogue will assist Parties in fine-tuning and clarifying pending issues on how to improve the UNCCD reporting process. In order to prepare a draft decision for this agenda item, a joint CRIC/CST contact group will be proposed in the joint CST/CRIC plenary.

41. *Action:* The joint CST/CRIC plenary will be invited to review the report prepared by the secretariat, engage in an information exchange on this topic, and review the draft decision as included in document ICCD/CRIC(22)/8 for further consideration and, as appropriate, adoption by the COP.

ICCD/CRIC(22)/7–ICCD/COP(16)/CST/8 – Improving procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Note by the secretariat

ICCD/CRIC(22)/8 – Draft decisions for consideration at the twenty-second session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. Note by the secretariat

5. Innovation and Technology in Ecologically Sustainable Agrifood Systems

42. *Background:* On 7 May 2024, an official request for the inclusion of Innovation and Technology in Ecologically Sustainable Agrifood Systems in the CST 16 agenda was received from the government of the United States of America.

43. In accordance with rule 10, paragraph e of the COP rules of procedure, the provisional agenda of a CST session should include, as appropriate, any item proposed by a Party and received by the secretariat before this agenda is circulated.

44. *Action:* The CST will be invited to consider the official request made by the United States, as circulated herewith, to all Parties as annex II in document ICCD/COP(16)/21–ICCD/COP(16)/CST/9 as well as document ICCD/COP(16)/21–ICCD/COP(16)/CST/9 and to take further action, as appropriate.

ICCD/COP(16)/21–ICCD/COP(16)/CST/9 – New emerging issues: grassland, rangeland and ecologically sustainable agri-food systems. Note by the secretariat

6. Procedural matters: Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology

45. *Background:* In accordance with rule 33 of the rules of procedure, the CST is to submit to the COP for adoption a tentative programme of work for its seventeenth session.

46. *Action:* The CST will be invited to review the draft decision relating to this agenda item contained in document ICCD/CST(16)/10 and to formulate a final draft decision for consideration by the COP.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology

47. Relevant information on the work of the Committee during its sixteenth session will be included in the report of the COP on its sixteenth session. In this respect, the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session, including draft decisions, where necessary, is expected to be submitted for consideration by the COP and, as appropriate, adoption at the concluding plenary meeting on 12 December 2024, in accordance with established practice.

ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10 – Draft decisions for consideration at the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology. Note by the secretariat

Annex

Tentative schedule of work for the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology

Tuesday 3 December 2024	
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3 p.m.–6 p.m.
	<p><i>Opening of the sixteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) by the Chair of the CST</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/1) Items resulting from the work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the triennium 2022–2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and drought (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/2, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10) Evidence on historical global and regional aridity trends and future projections that may contribute to expanding drylands and affected populations and the adaptation approaches (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/3, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10) <p><i>Interactive dialogue</i></p>

Wednesday 4 December 2024	
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3 p.m.–6 p.m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on modalities for reporting on the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework (ICCD/CRIC(22)/7-ICCD/COP(16)/CST/8, ICCD/CRIC(22)/8) <p><i>Interactive dialogue</i></p>	

Thursday 5 December 2024	
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3 p.m.–6 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items resulting from the work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the triennium 2022–2024 (<i>continued</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination activities of the Science-Policy Interface with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/4, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10) <i>Interactive dialogue (continued)</i> • Innovation and technology in ecologically sustainable agrifood Systems (ICCD/COP (16)/21-ICCD/COP (16)/CST/9) • Review of the work conducted by the Science-Policy Interface (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/6, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10)

Friday 6 December 2024	
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3 p.m.–6 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interfacing science and policy, and sharing knowledge (<i>continued</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interfacing science and policy, knowledge sharing and technology transfer (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10) • Work programme of the Science–Policy Interface beyond 2024 (ICCD/COP(16)/CST/7, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10)

Wednesday 11 December 2024	
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3 p.m.–6 p.m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedural matters: Programme of work for the seventeenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (<i>ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10</i>) 	

Thursday 12 December 2024	
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	3 p.m.–6 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology (<i>ICCD/COP(16)/CST/10</i>) Organizational matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election of officers other than the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology <p><i>Closure of the session</i></p>