United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System

4th Reporting and Review Cycle - 2010

Report for Emirates Environmental Group
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General Information Section

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Collaborative reports by accredited Civil Society Organizations

Are you submitting a report on Best Practices that was prepared in collaboration with different accredited organizations?

No

Specify the name of the organization(s)

If yes, please provide the full names and acronym of the organizations on whose behalf the present report is submitted. Kindly ensure that any duplication will be avoided: only one organization should submit a collaborative report on behalf of all the other organizations.

No answer provided
C. Best practices

According to decision 13/COP. 9, Annex V, UNCCD best practices shall be collected according to seven themes: 1. Sustainable land management (SLM) technologies, including adaptation; 2. Capacity building and awareness raising; 3. Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and SLM monitoring and assessment/research; 4. Knowledge management and decision support; 5. Policy, legislative, institutional framework; 6. Funding/resource mobilization; 7. Participation, collaboration and networking.

While themes 2 to 7 represent different elements of the enabling environment needed for the implementation and dissemination/up-scaling of sustainable land management (SLM) technologies (indirect impact), theme 1 comprises all actions on the ground that have a direct impact on desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation.

In particular, as specified in document ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5, paragraph 12, theme 1 ‘SLM technologies, including adaptation’ refers to SLM technologies that directly contribute to the prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation of desertification and land degradation on cropland, grazing land and woodland, with the aim of improving the livelihoods of affected populations and conserving ecosystem services. Successful implementation of SLM technologies is the base for achieving strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. Theme 1 also integrates five of the strategic areas defined by decision 8/COP.4, namely: (a) sustainable land use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas; (b) sustainable use and management of rangelands; (c) development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems; (d) development of new and renewable energy sources; and (e) launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes/ intensification of soil conservation programmes.

ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.5 provides definitions for ‘practice’, ‘good practice’ and ‘best practice’. These definitions are included in the common glossary that shall be referred to by Parties and other reporting entities while reporting to UNCCD, according to decision 13/COP.9, paragraph 8.

The template for reporting is based on the general structure for the documentation of best practices contained in ICCD/CRIC(8) /5/Add.5, paragraphs 40 to 43; it is tailored to the documentation of best practices related to theme 1 ‘SLM technologies, including adaptation’.

Best Practice #1

**Property rights**

Clarify if the technology described in the template, or a part of it, is covered by property rights:

No

*If yes, please provide relevant information on the holder of the rights.*

(max 100 words)

No answer provided

**Section 1. Context of the best practice: frame conditions (natural and human environment)**

**Title of the best practice**

EEG’s Million Tree Campaign

**Location (if available, also include a map)**

Various places within the UAE, covering all 7 Emirates

**Attachments:**

none

*Question marked as ‘No answer’.*

*If the location has well defined boundaries, specify its extension in hectares*

Hectares (ha)
Estimated population living in the location
Number of people
8000000

Prevailing land use within the specified location
- Human settlement
- Other

Other (specify) (max 30 words)
Desert Plains and mountainous Rock Formations

Brief description of the natural environment within the specified location
Climate: (max 50 words)
Climate hot & dry with the hottest months being July and August when average max temperatures reach above 48 °C. This is coupled with high humidity. Average temperatures in winter months (Jan-Feb) are 17-20°C. The average annual rainfall in the coastal areas is fewer than 120mm.

Soil: (max 50 words)
Soil: The geology of the UAE is split up into areas consisting of the desert floor, the coastal plains, the aeolian sands and gravel plains. The principal resources are hard, ophiolite-derived aggregate, limestone of cement, chromite, gypsum and construction sand.

Topography: (max 50 words)
The UAE is primarily flat or rolling desert. Its coast, which stretches along the southern shore of the Arabian Gulf and along the Gulf of Oman, consists mainly of salt pans that extend far inland. The UAE’s highest point, at 1,527 meters, in the jagged Al Hajar al Gharbi mountain chain.

Prevailing socio-economic conditions of those living in the location and/or nearby
Income level: (max 50 words)
The salaries given in the UAE are extremely variable. A minimum of AED 4000 is required per month for expatriates to bring their families into the UAE, but many are below this salary. The GNI per capita in 2004 was US$ 26,360 (Atlas Method, sited from World Bank).

Main income sources: (max 50 words)
The UAE’s economy remains heavily dependant on oil and natural gas, but Dubai also thrives on a service based economy from tourism, construction, telecommunications, media, real-estate and financial services.

Land tenure and land use rights: (max 50 words)
Only 0.6 percent of the UAE is considered to be arable land, and 2.3 percent of that land is planted to permanent crops. Most of the rural areas belong to the State, whilst a larger percentage of the urbanized areas are privately owned.

Short description of the best practice
max 250 words
The EEG Million Tree Project was launched under the aegis of UNEP’s Billion Tree Campaign with the aim of greening the UAE, educating society & helping to combat desertification. By engaging all sectors, EEG have planted or facilitated the planting of 1,618,513 trees across the UAE.

On the basis of which criteria and/or indicator(s) (not related to The Strategy) the proposed practice and corresponding technology has been considered as ‘best’?
max 100 words
With rapid urban expansion in the UAE & with developers not prioritizing sustainable green & outside
Section 2. Problems addressed (direct and indirect causes) and objectives of the best practice

With respect to DLDD, the best practice directly contributes to:
- Prevention
- Mitigation

Main problems addressed by the best practice
(max 50 words)
- 1. Increase greenery in rapidly expanding urban areas
- 2. Improves soil structures, fertility and natural biodiversity
- 3. Helps combat desertification
- 4. Educates society about the issues and pressures on land

Outline specific land degradation problems addressed by the best practice
(max 100 words)
With rapid urban expansion, shrubs & plants have been removed to make space for new projects. Some projects have slowed in the UAE due to the economic downturn, leaving huge areas cleared, but not populated. These areas become exposed to wind, water, reduced biodiversity, leading to desertification.

Specify the objectives of the best practice
(max 50 words)
- 1. To increase the number of trees and greenery in rapidly expanding urban areas
- 2. To rehabilitate/increase stability of soils and land within the UAE
- 3. To enhance community spirit and provide environmental education
- 4. To aid the increase of biodiversity/nature in urban areas by providing new habitats

Section 3. Activities

Brief description of main activities, by objective
Objective 1
(max 50 words)
- 1. Reach out to communities, schools, university’s, companies to raise awareness for the need to increase green spaces and trees
- 2. Make contact with corporate partners to engage them in a hands on activity to mitigate CO2 emissions and support the local community as well as improve the local habitats and assist with logistics for tree planting events.
- 3. Arrange a ‘tree planting event or day, communicate to involved parties, invite attendees, involve municipalities.

Objective 2
(max 50 words)
- 1. By planting indigenous trees that can cope with the harsh conditions of the UAE climate, their growth and rooting helps to stabilize fragile soils and regulate soil moisture.

Objective 3
(max 50 words)
- 1. EEG engage the community by using various outreach mechanisms such as e-newsletters, emails,
community lectures, publications, posters, flyers etc.

- EEG engage schools and academic institutions, offering the chance for the youth in society to get involved in a ‘hands on’ environmental activity.
- Through tree planting events, participants learn about the indigenous tree species, how greenery helps land, soils, nature and biodiversity as well as acting as a carbon sink.

**Objective 4**
(max 50 words)

- By planting new green areas in public parks, national forests, school grounds and amongst urban areas, new habitats are formed for insects, birds and wildlife that may otherwise be suffering from urban expansion pressures.

**Short description of the technology**
(max 250 words)

EEG is a not for profit professional working group, which is dedicated to environmental protection through means of education, action programmes and community engagement. One popular EEG programme is the Tree Planting activities which EEG continue to arrange.

**Technical specifications of the technology – if any**
(max 250 words)

Species of trees used are always indigenous to the UAE
Neem, Ghaf, Date Palm, Sidra, Accasia and mangrove trees.

Section 4. Institutions/actors involved (collaboration, participation, role of stakeholders)

**Name and address of the institution developing the technology**

Name
EEG’s Million Tree Campaign was set up under the aegis of UNEP’s Billion Tree Campaign. EEG formally updates UNEP on number of trees planted on a regular basis.

Address
Address of UNEP Headquarters:
UNEP, United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, PO Box 30552, 00100, Nairobi, Kenya.

**Was the technology developed in partnership?**

No

**If yes, list the partners:**

No answer provided

**Specify the framework within which the technology was promoted**

- Local initiative
- National initiative – non-government-led
- Programme/project-based initiative

**Other (specify) (max 30 words)**

No answer provided

**Was the participation of local stakeholders, including CSOs, fostered in the development of the technology**

Yes

**If yes, list local stakeholders involved:**

- Dubai Municipality
Other Emirates Municipality's
Local and International Schools
The Corporate Sector - companies who sponsor, support or participate in the event

For the stakeholders listed above, specify their role in the design, introduction, use and maintenance of the technology, if any.
max 250 words

Dubai Municipality have supported EEG and helped raise the profile of events. They give certain permissions to EEG to use land and provide labour for digging.
Local schools provide locations for events and the corporate sector offer financial support to buy trees and participate at events.

Was the population living in the location and/or nearby involved in the development of the technology?
No

If yes, by means of what?
No answer provided

Other (specify) (max 30 words)
No answer provided

Section 5. Contribution to impact

Specify to which strategic objectives of The Strategy the technology contributes
(more than one box can be ticked)

- 1. To improve the living conditions of affected population
- 2. To improve the conditions of affected ecosystems
- 3. To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD

Describe on-site impacts (the major two impacts by category)
Production or productivity:
1. (max 50 words)
   1) re-introduction of biodiversity through creating new habitats

2. (max 50 words)
   2) improved soil structure and fertility

Socio-economic level (including cultural level):
1. (max 50 words)
   1) enhanced community unity at large scale tree planting events, environmental education of participants feeds into society and will eventually create a greener nation seeking greener jobs

2. (max 50 words)
   2) The corporate sector can be involved in the activity by sponsoring local planting projects, fulfilling a company’s CSR objectives and using revenue on environmental programmes, and enhancing the land for other purposes.

Environmental level:
1. (max 50 words)
   1) Trees help remove excess amount of carbon dioxide and air pollutants present in the atmosphere, including sulfur dioxide, ozone and nitrogen oxide. In return, they give us oxygen required for living life.

2. (max 50 words)
2) Planting trees can help with the demand for fresh drinking water. Plant cover naturally slows the runoff of rainwater, filtering it through the land. Water can then seep down to refill underground aquifers. When occasional rain storms occur, trees will help prevent this fresh water reaching sea.

Other (specify):
1. (max 50 words)
   No answer provided

2. (max 50 words)
   No answer provided

Describe the major two off-site (i.e. not occurring in the location but in the surrounding areas) impacts
1. (max 50 words)
   1) Education of society from the grass roots level, instilling environmental knowledge to all sectors of society, driving the change to a sustainable future.

2. (max 50 words)
   2) trees absorb CO2, release oxygen, reduce pollution, help combat the urban heat island effect. The scale of EEG’s project is large enough to contribute globally in combating the climate challenges we face, as well as restoring local land and soils.

Impact on biodiversity and climate change
In your opinion does the best practice/technology you have proposed positively impact on biodiversity conservation? Yes

Explain the reasons:
max 250 words
   Trees serve as a natural habitat providing support to flora & fauna. They provide privacy and security to wildlife seeking shelter and provide them with food and nutrients. In this region trees and green areas attract birds and migratory populations, as well as stabilising soils.

In your opinion does the best practice/technology you have proposed positively impact on climate change mitigation? Yes

Explain the reasons:
max 250 words
   The practice encourages indigenous tree planting across the UAE which in turn increases the carbon sink capacity of greenhouse gases.

In your opinion does the best practice/technology you have proposed positively impact on climate change adaptation? Yes

Explain the reasons:
max 250 words
   EEG concentrate heavily on education for sustainable development; education is considered to be an important part in climate change adaptation. Through community events such as tree planting EEG is not only improving the local environment, but changing the mindset of communities, who can then adapt.

Has a cost-benefit analysis been carried out? No

If yes, summarize its main conclusions:
max 250 words
   No answer provided
Section 6. Connection to other UNCCD themes

Specify if the technology relates to one or more of the other UNCCD themes

- Capacity-building and awareness-raising
- Participation, collaboration and networking

Section 7. Adoption and replicability

Was the technology disseminated/introduced to other locations?

Yes

If yes, where? (add as many rows as necessary)

Location:
- Abu Dhabi
- Ajman
- Sharjah
- Fujairah
- Ras Al Khaimah
- Umm Al Quwain

Were incentives to facilitate the take up of the technology provided?

No

If yes, specify which type of incentives

No answer provided

Can you identify the three main conditions that led to the success of the presented best practice/technology?

Examples of conditions leading to success may include: highly motivated local governments, farmers organized into well structured cooperatives, extremely favorable weather conditions, etc. For each 'condition of success' you are able to identify, specify whether in your opinion such condition is: (a) linked to the local context and thus cannot be replicated elsewhere; (b) replicable elsewhere with some level of adaptation; (c) replicable elsewhere with major adaptation.

1. (max 50 words)

Municipality support to allow events in National Parks or certain areas, especially Dubai Municipality, Dubai Police department and Ajman Municipality. A good working relationship and open communication helped the success of the events. Emirates Heritage Club also helps events to be successful.

2. (max 50 words)

Positive impacts on the environment and society (replicable elsewhere. People have become aware of the benefits of the activity and are keen to keep planting trees because of its numerous benefits.

3. (max 50 words)

Low cost activity, allowing for participation from all members of society and corporations. This makes the activity easily replicable elsewhere if good relationships are built up.

In your opinion, the best practice/technology you have proposed can be replicated, although with some level of adaptation, elsewhere?

Yes

If yes, at which level?

- Local
Section 8. Lessons learned

**Related to human resources**
(max 50 words)
- Good coordination and cooperation with relevant municipalities and government agencies was key.

**Related to financial aspects**
(max 50 words)
- Building relationships with the corporate sector and encouraging CSR principals aided financial contributions to events
- The use of local authority’s staff to help plant and maintain the plants helped make the large scale events possible.

**Related to technical aspects**
(max 50 words)
- EEG only encourage the planting of indigenous plants that are adapted to cope with the climatic conditions of this region – the success of tree growth is partly down to this.
- Maintenance until the plants are well established was always well coordinated.
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