COP 17 Launch Overview | 24 August 2026

Financing Investments and Eradicating Land Degradation and Desertification (FIELD) Initiative

A SPECIAL INITIATIVE OF THE NATURE SOLUTIONS FINANCE HUB (NSFH)

PARTNERS WITH INITIAL INTEREST TO COLLABORATE (COORDINATED UNDER THE NSFH)

CHALLENGE: Land degradation and desertification pose a major threat to food security, climate resilience, biodiversity, water resources, and rural livelihoods across Asia and the Pacific. Dryland landscapes—including agricultural ecosystems, grasslands, savannas, shrublands, and dry forests—cover approximately 40% of the region's land area and support more than 40% of its population. They underpin agricultural production, regulate major river basins, store significant carbon, and contain around one-third of the world's biodiversity hotspots. However, increasing drought, soil erosion, and unsustainable land use are weakening the productivity and resilience of farming and pastoral communities, as well as degrading ecosystems. These issues are further compounded by climate change risks, fragmented governance, and chronic underinvestment. Addressing the challenge requires (i) scaling up well-prepared project pipelines in the region to attract much-needed financing from all sources—public, private, capital markets—that can help close the large financing gap,[1] and (ii) developing policies and capacities (technical, financial, and institutional) with governments to raise the urgency of project pipeline development and innovative financing across Asia and the Pacific.

The FIELD Initiative

OBJECTIVE: The FIELD Initiative aims to mobilize at least $2 billion by 2035 from both public finance and private capital sources, including capital markets, to combat land degradation and desertification in Asia and the Pacific.

KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS BY 2035

$2 billion
in investments initiated

This target capital will mobilize an investment pipeline for landscape restoration and climate-resilient food systems.

1 million
hectares restored

About 1 million hectares will be brought under sustainable land management, adopting restoration and conservation practices, to reduce land degradation and water insecurity.

Resilient Societies

Communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, will be supported to become more resilient to climate risks and shocks through improved food and water security.

The FIELD Initiative will be coordinated under the Nature Solutions Finance Hub (NSFH), an Asian Development Bank (ADB)-led initiative that unites multiple partners to scale innovative nature finance across Asia and the Pacific. Launched at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai, the NSFH includes the following financing partners: France, through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the European Union (EU), the Green Climate Fund through the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF) Green Recovery Program, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC Fund), and the UK-ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility. The NSFH technical partners include BirdLife International, Conservation International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), NatureFinance, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

1 This was highlighted at the 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16) in 2024, which was led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and where more than $12 billion were pledged to tackle desertification, land degradation, and drought around the world, leading to its continuing focus at UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia.

ACTIVITY PILLARS AND KEY OUTPUTS: To achieve its objective and targets, FIELD will proactively undertake an integrated series of activities: (i) develop project pipelines, including innovative finance structures, that could catalyze capital from public, private, and bond market sources; (ii) establish a knowledge platform for guiding policies and building capacities across government levels; and (iii) facilitate access to financing from various sources (including concessional where possible) and create regional or national de-risking finance facilities to support projects with incentive finance, linked with catalyzing private capital sources.

ACTIVITY PILLAR 1

Grant and Technical Assistance Window

Supports upstream policy reform, land tenure security, and the preparation of 15+ bankable investment projects

ACTIVITY PILLAR 2

Knowledge Platforms and Regional Partnerships

Deploys knowledge partnership across countries and provides training for regional stakeholders and implements technical partnerships for land degradation mapping and monitoring

ACTIVITY PILLAR 3

Catalytic Finance Window

Mobilize a $2 billion pipeline through blended finance, de-risking instruments, and nature-based carbon/biodiversity credits

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM AND EXISTING PIPELINE: Implementation will be coordinated under the NSFH, drawing together a team of experts from relevant sectoral and thematic teams. An initial pipeline of projects spanning drought-prone and land-degraded countries has already been identified by ADB for quick progress into implementation.

PARTNERSHIP MODEL: The FIELD Initiative aims to actualize for Asia and the Pacific the commitments and pledges made at UNCCD COP16 in 2024, several of which are being developed under the Riyadh Action Agenda and Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership (RGDRP). A partnership approach that best leverages the strengths of the various potential technical and financial partners identified, as well as the RGDRP, will be scoped out post-launch of the FIELD Initiative at UNCCD COP17 to undertake the combination of activities listed below.

Activity Areas for Partners

1. Joint project identification
2. Selected project structuring by partner, dependent on technical, institutional or financial aspects
3. Knowledge and capacity building hub (or possible "Center of Excellence") to be created or led by a specific partner
4. Financing for project preparation (grants) or project financing (loans and concessional finance) to be undertaken on a project-specific basis

Linkage between FIELD and ADB's Operational Approach for Food Systems Transformation in Asia and the Pacific (2026–2030)

The FIELD target of $2 billion aims to support ADB's $40 billion Food Systems Transformation agenda by developing and/or investing in projects focusing on grasslands, drylands, and degraded ecosystems critical to the food value chain. It also supports ADB's Environment Action Plan by aiming to develop nature-positive solutions and catalytic finance models for land restoration.

For more information, please contact:

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