



OBSERVATOIRE DU SAHARA ET DU SAHEL
SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY

CALL FOR TENDERS

MID-TERM EVALUATION
OF THE SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY
2030 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

[\[AO/OSS/SE-Eval-Mi-Parcours-Strat2030/011024-25\]](#)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMCOW:	African Ministers' Council on Water
CAADP:	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CBD:	Convention on Biological Diversity
EB:	Executive Board
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
GA:	General Assembly
IAS:	Iullemeden Aquifer System
IGAD:	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
NDCs:	Nationally Determined Contributions
NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NWSAS:	North Western Sahara Aquifer System
OSS:	Sahara and Sahel Observatory
OSS/ES:	OSS Executive Secretariat
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SOC:	Strategic Orientation Committee
UMA:	Arab Maghreb Union
UNCCD:	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1- CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

1.1. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE OSS STRATEGIES

The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) is an international-scope Organization with an African vocation, founded in 1992 and established in Tunis since 2000. It now has 47 members, including 27 African countries, 7 non-African countries, as well as 13 regional Organizations including 2 UN agencies and 3 civil society Organizations. The OSS mainly works on supporting its members in the sustainable management of their natural resources, particularly in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, in a climate change context. Since it was created, the OSS has developed its own strategies to contend with the environmental challenges of the Sahel-Saharan region, in line with local, regional and international contexts. These strategies related to 2000, 2010, 2020, and currently 2030 and mark a constant evolution and adaptation to emerging challenges.

The 2000 Strategy was adopted in 1997 and designed in an African context marked by the adoption of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1994. This first strategic framework formalized the OSS commitment to supporting Member States in the fight against desertification and sustainable land management.

The 2010 Strategy was adopted in 2004 and marked a significant expansion of the OSS scope of action. By integrating new issues, such as climate change (UNFCCC) and biodiversity (CBD), this strategy went beyond previous priorities. While still supporting the implementation of the UNCCD and Agenda 21, it restated the OSS commitment to addressing current challenges, particularly through its alignment with initiatives such as NEPAD. This strategy has also consolidated the OSS contribution in the management of transboundary aquifers through three major projects: The North Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS), the Iullemeden Aquifer System (IAS) and water resources in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region. Moreover, it helped consolidate the OSS previous achievements in environmental monitoring systems and action plan follow-up, while conducting studies on the preventive management of the foreseeable impacts of climate change and variability, thus providing member countries with useful information to inform their decision-making.

The 2020 Strategy was adopted in 2012 by the General Assembly (GA) and came in a context of reinforced regional partnerships and alignment with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was based on an in-depth analysis of the challenges ahead of the Sahara-Sahel region by 2020, highlighting the interactions between environmental degradation, climate change, demography and the fight against poverty among rural populations. This strategy aimed to meet the needs of the countries in its area of action by drawing on the three Rio conventions, NEPAD and the sector policies for the integration of economic sub-regions (UMA, ECOWAS and IGAD) in the areas of environment, water and agriculture. This strategic framework wanted to consolidate the OSS achievements while aligning, as much as possible, with the policies and strategies of its members and regional partners, which has brought tangible advances in key sectors such as water, land and climate, by supporting the integration of scientific and technical data into the countries' decision-making processes. However, challenges persist, particularly in terms of financing and in the management flexibility and institutional ownership.

The **2030 Strategy** came to light in 2020 and was a follow-up to the 2020 Strategy, while responding to the need to adapt to contemporary challenges. It strengthened the scientific and technical focus of the previous strategy while placing particular emphasis on climate finance and the preservation of biological capital. In addition, it introduced a Watch&Prospective component that replaced the Observatory function of previous strategies, so that the institution is best suited to face emerging issues in its area of action.

1.2. THE OSS 2030 STRATEGY

The **OSS 2030 Strategy**¹ is based on a strategic framework aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, the Rio Conventions, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the African Development Bank's 5 priorities for Africa, as well as the broad outlines of the (water, environment, agriculture, forestry, CES, etc.) sector strategies of the sub-regions and countries in its area of action. This strategy aims to support member countries in the implementation of their sustainable development strategies, while strengthening regional cooperation. It relies on a scientific and technical program that focuses on "Integrated and coordinated management of natural resources", which encompasses **four interconnected thematic areas: Water, Land, Climate and Biodiversity**, each having an overall strategic objective and specific operational objectives.

WATER

Strategic objective: Contributing to meeting the water needs of the populations and to the sustainable management of water resources.

Operational objectives:

- Improving knowledge of surface and groundwater resources.
- Establishing short, medium and long-term planning tools for water resources management.
- Supporting integrated and sustainable water resources management policies.
- Improving and sustaining the governance of shared water resources.

LAND

Strategic objective: Building the capacities of Member States to mitigate the negative effects of drought and combat desertification and land degradation.

Operational objectives:

- Improving planning and monitoring-evaluation tools for sustainable land management actions.
- Strengthening drought early warning mechanisms.
- Supporting the implementation of national and sub-regional action programs for sustainable land management.

CLIMATE

Strategic objective: Building the capacities of Member States and the resilience of the populations to climate change.

¹ [OSS-Strategie2030_Fr.pdf \(oss-online.org\)](https://oss-online.org/OSS-Strategie2030_Fr.pdf)

Operational objectives:

- Improving climate risk management mechanisms.
- Supporting the implementation and monitoring of the countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- Supporting the implementation and management of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.
- Fostering the countries' access to climate finance.

BIODIVERSITY

Strategic objective: Providing knowledge and methods for assessing biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Operational objectives:

- Developing natural capital accounting tools to be integrated into national and regional action plans.
- Supporting the integration of biodiversity into planning and development strategies.
- Promoting the identification, search for funding and implementation of post-2020 national biodiversity action plans.

The 2030 Strategy scientific and technical program is supported by three cross-cutting programs in order to optimize the achievement of these objectives.

WATCH&PROSPECTIVE

Strategic objective: Strengthening the OSS performance by capitalizing on achievements, planning ahead future developments and identifying potential risks.

Operational objectives:

- Developing summary and capitalization products of all acquired knowledge.
- Contributing to the scientists/non-scientists Intermediation.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Strategic objective: Developing and implementing training programs to strengthen skills related to the OSS areas of intervention.

Operational objectives:

- Permanently capitalizing and extending its knowledge.
- Contributing to the scientists/non-scientists Intermediation.
- Developing adequate channels and means of exchange and sharing.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Strategic objective: Promoting the OSS knowledge and achievements, informing and raising awareness about its interventions, disseminating its expertise, strengthening its national and international visibility, and mobilizing strategic partnerships.

Operational objectives:

- Disseminating and promoting the OSS products.
- Training the media and media professionals and raising awareness among the general public about environmental issues.

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE MISSION

The OSS has come to halfway through the implementation of its 2030 Strategy and has decided to go for an in-depth evaluation of the achievements, identification of the challenges encountered and adaption of future actions. The goal is to make sure that the Strategy remains aligned with the needs of the beneficiaries, while considering regional priorities and the evolution of the context.

The assignment will also help verify the relevance and effectiveness of the Strategy, in line with the expected results and the Sustainable Development Goals for the Sahel and Sahara countries. For this to happen, the OSS is launching a call for tenders for the selection of a qualified consultant.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this mission is to provide an in-depth mid-term assessment of the OSS 2030 Strategy implementation, in order to guide future actions towards achieving its expected results. This will be achieved through the following specific objectives:

- Assessing the achievement of the 2030 Strategy objectives and expected outcomes;
- Identifying the successes, challenges and lessons learned from the first phase of implementation;
- Bringing recommendations to optimize future actions;
- Adapting strategic priorities, if necessary, in order to achieve the final objectives of the 2030 Strategy.

3. EVALUATION KEY QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the objectives, the evaluation will answer several questions that will help make a deeper analysis of the **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability** and **future improvements** of the 2030 Strategy.

Relevance:

- How aligned the actions implemented are with the initial priorities and objectives of the 2030 Strategy?
- Is the strategy still adapted to the current needs of member countries, especially in a context of constantly evolving regional priorities?

Effectiveness:

- How tangible and measurable is progress towards the achievement of the expected results in the four priority thematic areas (water, land, climate, biodiversity) at this stage of implementation?
- What factors have helped make progress towards the strategic objectives, and what specific challenges have hindered the implementation of planned actions?

Efficiency:

- Have the available resources been optimally managed to optimize expected results?
- Are there opportunities to improve efficiency in the use of the resources?

Sustainability:

- Are the results achieved so far sustainable in the long term? Would they last beyond the implementation period?
- What actions need to be taken to ensure the sustainability of the achievements over time?

Future improvements:

- What specific and concrete adaptations need to be put in place to improve the second phase of the 2030 Strategy and optimize its long-term impact?

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation of the OSS 2030 Strategy will cover the 2020-2024 period. It will analyze the progress made in the aforementioned key thematic areas and cross-cutting programs. The focus will be on the results obtained, the challenges encountered and the adjustments needed for the next phase. The evaluation will cover several important aspects, namely:

- Activities carried out in the intervention areas of the strategy: water resources management, biodiversity, combating desertification and adaptation to climate change.
- Flagship projects and collaborations with member countries and international partners.
- The effectiveness and efficiency of governance structures and monitoring-evaluation mechanisms.
- Analysis of the results according to the performance indicators defined at the beginning of the strategy.

5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of this evaluation should help guide the further implementation of the 2030 Strategy, with concrete and measurable recommendations. Each outcome is part of an in-depth analysis of the different aspects of the strategy.

ASSESSED RELEVANCE OF THE INTERVENTIONS

1. A report detailing the alignment of actions with the OSS current strategic priorities and the evolving needs of member countries, with proposals for adjustments to ensure their relevance.

ANALYSED EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERVENTIONS BY THEME

2. An assessment of the progress made in priority areas (water, land, climate, biodiversity), highlighting the results obtained and the improvements for each theme.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND LESSONS LEARNED IDENTIFIED

3. A summary document of the main challenges that have hindered the implementation of the strategy, supported by lessons learned from these experiences to adjust future actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FINAL PHASE

4. A consolidated plan of action, integrating strategic recommendations to optimize the impact of interventions in the final phase of the 2030 Strategy.

ASSESSED SUSTAINABILITY OF THE RESULTS

5. An analysis of the long-term viability of the results, with recommendations to strengthen the sustainability of the achievements, particularly in the natural resources management.

6. DUTIES OF THE CONSULTANT

In order to guarantee the success of the assessment, it is crucial to implement what follows:

Evaluation of the results and impact

- Analyze operational results, including products, concepts, methodologies and publications produced in the framework of the 2030 Strategy implementation, while assessing their impact on the beneficiaries and targeted areas, in accordance with the indicators established in Annex 1 of the Strategy Logical Framework.
- Assess the commitment and participation of member countries and their specialized Organizations as well as the impact of such a participation on the implementation and effectiveness of actions.
- Review strategic results, including the OSS positioning, ownership of the results, how is the OSS perceived by its member countries and institutions, and the overall impact of the Strategy on regional development.

Analysis of the sustainability and challenges

- Assess the sustainability of actions and results by determining how they are integrated into member countries' institutions and identifying challenges and obstacles that hinder their adoption.
- Study the obstacles encountered during the implementation, including financial challenges, as well as the potential solutions adopted to overcome these obstacles.
- Assess the ability of the OSS and its Strategy to meet regional challenges, considering the changing needs of member countries and partners.

Recommendations and positioning

- Come up with recommendations considering the current context in the OSS area of action and the international context, including the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the 2030 Agenda, the strategic plans of the Rio Conventions, as well as the Paris Agreement on climate and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- Consider the African Union Agenda 2063 and African sector strategies, such as AMCOW, CAADP, and the African Space Strategy, to align OSS initiatives with regional and continental objectives.
- Assess the OSS positioning in relation to other regional and sub-regional Organizations working on the environment, while considering the opportunities offered by Climate Finance and multilateral Funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, in order to strengthen support for environmental initiatives.
- Review the visibility of the OSS actions at national, sub-regional and international levels, by integrating stakeholders, including members, technical and financial partners, as well as civil society.

7. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The consultant will have to submit a detailed and relevant approach for this mission, discussed and validated with the experts of the OSS Executive Secretariat (OSS/ES). The evaluation will be based on a mixed approach, based on four main aspects.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

A thorough review of the project reports, annual reviews and strategy monitoring documents will help contextualize the results and assess the effectiveness of the implementation.

The OSS will provide the consultant with all necessary documents, including:

- The OSS 2010 Strategy
- Evaluation of the OSS 2010 Strategy implementation
- The OSS 2020 Strategy
- Mid-term evaluation of the OSS 2020 Strategy implementation
- The OSS Quadrennial Activity Report (2016)
- The OSS Quadrennial Activity Report (2020)
- The OSS 2030 Strategy

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection will be carried out through several methods, including:

Consultations and interviews: The collection of internal (OSS members) and external (partners, experts, local communities) stakeholders' perspectives will be done through formal and targeted dialogues.

Surveys: The questionnaires and surveys will aim to collect relevant quantitative and qualitative data, thus strengthening the information base.

PARTICIPATORY VALIDATION

Online discussion groups will involve stakeholders, thus helping validate the results obtained and the co-formulation of recommendations adapted to the realities and identified needs.

8. DELIVERABLES, DURATION AND REMUNERATION

8.1. DELIVERABLES

The expected deliverables for the mid-term evaluation of the OSS 2030 Strategy are as follows:

- **D1 - Consolidated Methodology Note:** A document detailing the final methodology, including the interview guide, the list of people and institutions to contact, as well as the validated methodology approaches. This deliverable will be produced after the methodology is validated by the OSS/ES and the kick-off meeting.
- **D2 - Evaluation reports**
 - **D2.1 - Preliminary mid-term report:** A draft of the 2030 Strategy implementation evaluation, based on the analysis of the first results, the interviews conducted, and the data collected. This report will include a preliminary assessment of the progress made and how to adjust the ongoing actions.

- **D2.2 - Draft final report:** A draft final report of the 2030 Strategy implementation evaluation. This document will reflect the in-depth assessment of the results obtained, the obstacles encountered, as well as recommendations for the optimization of the strategy. It will be submitted for review and comments before finalization.
- **D2.3 - Final evaluation report:** The final report, including the OSS/ES comments and recommendations. This complete report will be presented in French and English and will be the reference document for the 2030 Strategy adjustments for the remaining period.
- **D2.4 - Presentation of the evaluation results:** A French/English summary presentation of the evaluation findings will be presented at the various OSS bodies, including the General Assembly due on April 2025. This deliverable will make it possible to share the results of the evaluation with the Board members, the Strategic Orientation Committee (SOC), and other stakeholders.

Table 1 - List of the deliverables and delivery times

Deliverable	Delivery times
D1. Consolidated methodology note - deliverable 1	Ten (10) effective working days after the framing meeting and the contract signature (November 30, 2024)
D2.1. Preliminary mid-term report - deliverable 2	Twenty (20) effective working days after validation of deliverable 1 (December 31, 2024)
D2.2. Draft final report - deliverable 3	Twenty (20) effective working days from validation of deliverable 2 (February 2025)
D2.3. Final evaluation report - deliverable 4	Twenty (20) effective working days after the validation meeting (March 1, 2025)
D2.4. Presentation of the evaluation results	During the General Assembly due on April 2025

8.2. EVALUATION PLANNING AND SCHEDULE

The evaluation process will include three phases:

Phase 1: Data collection and validation of the methodology (indicative duration: 2 weeks)

This phase will include an in-depth bibliographic collection to identify the strategic and methodological framework. A consolidated methodology note, including an interview guide for stakeholders, will be submitted to the OSS/ES for validation.

Phase 2: Evaluation of the 2030 Strategy implementation (indicative duration: 4 months)

The purpose will be to assess the achievement of the 2030 Strategy objectives, by identifying successes, challenges and obstacles encountered, and by formulating recommendations for the implementation to proceed in the best possible conditions.

Phase 3: Presentation of the results

The results will be presented to the OSS Executive Board and General Assembly in 2025, during a session dedicated to the 2030 Strategy evaluation.

Table 2 - Indicative timetable for the evaluation

Month	Phase / Main tasks / Deliverable(s)	OSS instance interactions
MID-NOVEMBER 2024	Phase 1: Kick-off meeting: Consolidation of the methodology, interview guide, list of people/institutions to contact	Participation of the ES. Deliverable: Consolidated methodology note
DECEMBER 2024	Phase 2: Evaluation of the 2030 Strategy implementation (Kick-off)	Validation of the methodology and contacts (ES).
JANUARY 2025	Phase 2: Interviews and data collection	Participation of the ES, SOC, and EB. Progress report No. 1
FEBRUARY 2025	Phase 2: Analysis and interim review: Preliminary mid-term report (D2.1)	Review of the 2030 Strategy tracks (ES and SOC). Progress report No. 2
EARLY MARCH 2025	Phase 2: Evaluation and final validation: draft final report (D2.2) and consolidation of the results	Review of the draft report. (ES and SOC). Progress report No. 3
APRIL 2025	Phase 3: Presentation at the OSS General Assembly: Final report and presentation (D2.3 and D2.4)	Presentation of the final report and the summary (ES, SOC, EB)

The consultant will have to comply with the established schedule and ensure delivery of the expected results within the specified timeframe. Any change to this schedule must be subject to prior written approval by the OSS.

8.3. DURATION AND REMUNERATION

The mission will extend from November 2024 to March 2025, over 150 calendar days, from the date the contract is concluded by the parties. The number of effective working days is set at 70 man/days.

Payment of fees will be made by the OSS to the account specified by the consultant. Payment will be made in three installments, in accordance with the table below:

Table 3 - Payment terms for the consultation

Installments	Payment Terms	Amount
Installment 1	Upon validation of deliverable 1 (methodology note) by the OSS	30% of the total contract amount
Installment 2	Upon delivery of deliverable 2 (final report) to the OSS	50% of the total contract amount
Installment 3	Upon presentation of the report to the General Assembly	20% of the total contract amount

9. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

The Consultant will be selected based on the quality of the resume and the compatibility of the skills with the mission. The selected Consultant must meet the following criteria:

ACADEMIC TRAINING

Required degree: Advanced degree (Master's degree minimum) in environmental sciences and/or natural resources management.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Consultant must have 10 years of proven experience in:

- Conducting multidisciplinary program evaluations involving many partners and varied themes, particularly in the water, land, climate and biodiversity sectors.
- Strategic planning, with the ability to conduct complex situational analyses and formulate recommendations based on such analyses.
- Analysis of current dynamics in the areas of water, sustainable land management and climate, with a particular focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

SPECIFIC SKILLS

- A good knowledge of the African and international institutional landscape in the fields of environment, natural resources management and climate, with an ability to integrate this knowledge into regional strategies.
- Strong analytical skills for evaluating program results, writing clear and detailed reports, and formulating relevant recommendations.
- Excellent writing and communication skills, both in French and English, to ensure effective exchanges with stakeholders and the production of quality documents.

REFERENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Proven experience** in similar missions, preferably in connection with sustainable natural resources management programs in Africa, and the ability to add value through relevant analyses and strategic recommendations.

10. PRESENTATION OF THE FILE

The consultant will have to submit a technical offer and a financial offer. The financial and technical offers must be strictly separated.

10.1. Technical offer

The Consultant will have to provide a technical offer including the following documents:

- **Curriculum vitae:** in accordance with the standard OSS CV template downloadable from the following link: [[Modèle CV OSS](#)]
- **Copies of diplomas**
- **Methodology note:** A 4-10 score detailing the final methodology, including the interview guide, the list of people and institutions to contact, as well as the validated methodological approaches.
- **Chronogram:** A schedule of the study steps.
- **Other references:** Potentially useful documents.

10.2. Financial offer

The Consultant will have to provide a financial offer in Euros valid for three months, starting from the day following the submission deadline.

11. EVALUATION

The selection process for the OSS 2030 Strategy mid-term evaluation will first include the evaluation of the technical offers and then the evaluation of the financial offers.

11.1. Technical offer

The evaluation and comparison of the technical offers will be done with no financial considerations. Offers will be scored out of a total of 100 points according to the criteria set out in the table below. To be eligible, a technical offer must have a minimum score of **70 out of 100**.

11.2. Financial offer

Only bidders who have obtained a satisfactory technical score will have their financial offers considered. The financial offer scores (FS) will be calculated according to the following formula:

The financial offer scores (FS) will be calculated as follows

FS = 100 x Fm/F, with:

- FS: Financial score of the bidder
- Fm: Lowest financial proposal of the technically successful offers
- F: Financial proposal of the bidder

11.3. Final evaluation

The offers will be ranked according to their overall score (OS) according to the following formula: $OS = [TS \times (70\%)] + [FS \times (30\%)]$

- OS : Overall score
- TS : Technical score
- FS : Financial score

The consultant will be selected based on the offer that obtained the highest overall score (OS).

Table 4 - Technical offer rating scale

Elements	Points
Degree: Minimum Master's degree in environmental sciences, natural resources management, or related field	10
Analytical and reformulated restitution of a good understanding of the mission, the consultant's responsibilities and the mission's objectives	10
Work methodology: work plan adapted and consistent with the mission's objectives	20
Experience in multidisciplinary program evaluation and strategic planning (minimum 10 years, at least 3 similar missions)	20
Experience in sustainable natural resources management in Africa (at least 2 relevant experiences)	20
Knowledge of the African and international institutional landscape in the fields of environment and climate	10
French and English writing skills (5 points per language)	10
Total	100

12. SUBMISSION TERMS AND DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted by email only, before OCTOBER 21, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. (Tunis time, GMT+1). Bidders must send their applications to the following address: procurement@oss.org.tn, mentioning [AO/OSS/SE-Eval-Mi-Parcours-Strat2030/011024-25] in the subject line of the message.

13. REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

For any request for additional information, bidders may contact the OSS Administrative and Financial Department by email at least ten (10) days before the deadline at the following address: sonia.njah@oss.org.tn