

Draft Roadmap for implementation of the 1st phase of ECO LANDCARE Initiative (2023-2025)

This paper has been created in response to the Member States' request to the Secretariat during the Antalya meeting (December 2021) to produce a Roadmap for determining the most efficient means to implement the 1st phase of the ECO LandCare Initiative (ECO-LCI). Thus, the current paper is neither an executive summary nor is it suggesting new goals or tasks; rather, it is a brief document to aid in the LCI's inception.

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Introduction:

Droughts have become more frequent and severe over the past few decades, along with issues related to the development agenda and population growth, which have worsened land degradation in some areas of the region while land degradation has its direct negative effects in the same respect as other contributors to climate change effects.

ECO positions itself as a staunch supporter of the fight against global warming and climate change and, therefore, land degradation; and The ECO LandCare Initiative (LCI) has been developed in order to address these issues and stop and reverse land degradation and its effects throughout the ECO Region.

Background:

LCI has been created during the course of the following procedure at various stages:

- ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (November 2015, Istanbul) recognised the significance of combating desertification in the Member States and the ECO Region as a whole, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a detailed needs assessment as well as the design of the relevant training/capacity-building initiatives and contents. A preliminary draft was created by the Secretariat, utilising the ECO VISION 2025, and shared with the Member States for review.
- July 2016: the ECO Secretariat organised a Project Consultation Workshop in Tehran, where the nominated representatives from the Member States and the ECO-IEST presented the land degradation and conservation issues their countries were facing as well as specific needs for support and assistance.
- Following the workshop, the ECO LandCare Initiative (LCI) was proposed as a regional partnership to address associated environmental, social, and economic threats of land degradation.
- April 2018: the Project Development Phase was finished and the Secretariat followed up further to launch the Initiative.
- November 2019: ECO RPC recognised the LCI as the sole flagship project in the environmental component.
- December 2021: Turkey, co-hosted a workshop on the development of the ECO LandCare Initiative to identify prospective sources for implementation, exchanging ideas, experiences, and information and effective ways to carry out the Initiative. It was proposed that a Roadmap be created and the current paper serves this purpose.

The LCI in a glance:

The overall, long-term Goal of the LCI is to halt and reverse land degradation and its effects throughout the ECO region.

LCI includes two phases; a three-year first phase for management, financing, and completing essential assessments of dryland conservation concerns and solutions in each nation as well as the ECO area. The second phase is intended for the implementation, extension, and scaling-up of certain actions over a further 10 years or more.

Objectives:

LCI will facilitate scientific cooperation, stakeholder participation, and experience exchange on trends in land degradation and the availability of practical long-term solutions, in sustainable land use, drylands conservation, and restoration among the Member states.

LCI seeks to strengthen local and sub-national sustainable land management initiatives in priority sectors and locations, encourage and support Member States' contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and encourage and support the development of effective, scalable solutions and effective mechanisms for knowledge and capacity exchange.

LCI is suggesting that land degradation and its downstream effects, result from inappropriate land development actions and or poor land-use practises utilised by the economic development sectors. These may include the development of urban settlements, transport infrastructure and agricultural practices or catchments management.

Strategic Approach:

The Initiative will also test, promote, and advocate for the following four primary categories of actions to boost dryland conservation efforts in the ECO region through dual processes of regional and national reporting and information exchange, as well as on-the-ground demonstration actions:

- 1 Actions that enhance and extend policies and practices for sustainable and climate resilient dryland management
- 2 Actions that limit or phase-out damaging land-use practices, especially in the most vulnerable dryland parts of the region
- 3 Actions to significantly scale-up dryland ecological restoration activities, especially in priority localities
- 4 Actions to support the expansion of adequate long-term protection of healthy dryland ecosystems

During the implementation of the LCI, interested Member States will determine, evaluate, and keep track of which sectors and development projects in various parts present the best chances for

enhancing the outcomes of land, water, and biodiversity conservation by altering land-use patterns in key development sectors and projects and including land, water, and biodiversity protection measures, to discover and create possible "win-win" prospects.

By putting this strategic approach into practice, the ECO region may anticipate creating synergies that support the Member States to prevent land degradation and lessen the frequency and effects of sand and dust storms.

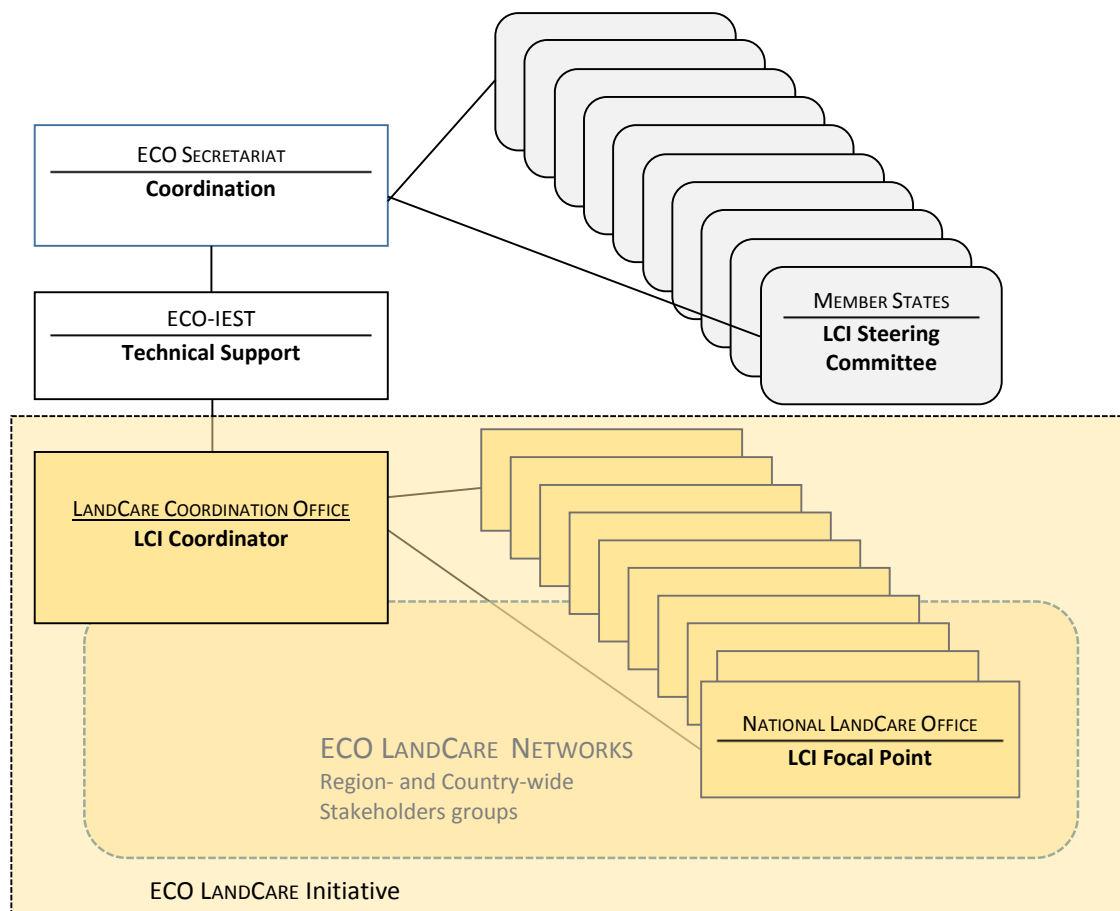
Timetable:

		Year	0	1	2	3										
1st phase	PLANNING + APPROVALS															
	LANDCARE INITIATIVE INCEPTION															
	COMPONENT 1. COLLABORATION															
	COMPONENT 2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT															
	COMPONENT 3. INITIAL ACTIONS															
	PLANNING OF 2 ND PHASE PROGRAM															
			Year				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2ND PHASE	ECO-LANDCARE INITIATIVE APPROVALS															
	INCEPTION															
	COLLABORATION															
	KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT															
	IMPLEMENTATION															

Implementation Arrangements:

LCI implementation cannot be accomplished on a multi-national scale, without adequate coordination to advance clear communication and coordination from start to finish, and ensure appropriate agencies and technical experts provide consistent input at all stages of the two phases.

Meanwhile, effective administration involves planning, coordinating, and enduring resources are needed to assure that the Initiative successfully achieves its target goals within the given constraints.



Budget:

Based on the anticipated activities and arrangements for administration and execution over three years across the 10 Member States, the indicative budget planned for the first phase was US\$10.8 million but this Roadmap is uses the zero-based budgeting methodology and the tentative budget plan serves as the framework for negotiating financial contributions from regional and global partners, sponsors, donors and the interested Member States.

Monitoring Framework:

LCI progress will be monitored through routine reporting, and periodic review and evaluation, based on a Results and Monitoring Framework which specifies Indicators and monitoring methods alongside the hierarchy of Activities, Results and Outcome objectives.

Risk Assessment

A preliminary assessment of potential risks that the LCI may not be able to proceed as planned or may not achieve the expected Results and Outcomes, is listed in the Project Document while the Risk Assessment will be reviewed and updated in the first phase.

This Roadmap

The Project Document outlines the justifications, objectives, risks, and budget and also segments the work into tasks, making it easier to assign responsibilities and track progress right away. It serves as a basic guide for completing the tasks in addition to giving more specific information on the resources being used and the precise objectives being pursued.

This Roadmap's main goal is to determine the most efficient means to implement the 1st phase of the LCI. Thus, the current paper is neither an executive summary nor is it suggesting new goals or tasks; rather, it is a brief document to aid in the LCI's inception. The following table compares how this Roadmap and the Project Document differ in terms of their respective roles:

	Roadmap	Project Document
Level	overall view	containing or resembling particles
Purpose	demonstrating the relationship between components	divides the project into tasks to assign work, measure progress, and monitor outcomes.
Details	gives a brief overall description	provides a comprehensive look into the project

Why?

While a comprehensive list of objectives and expected results are listed in the Project Document to achieve the LCI main Goal of halting and reversing land degradation and associated impacts for the Purpose of establishing a collaborative LandCare Initiative across multiple sectors in the participating ECO Member States; the following Objectives and Planned Results are suggested for the 1st phase:

OUTCOME 1: Collaboration and Synergy

- 1.1 Initiating regional and national participation.
- 1.2 Recognition of exemplary contributions.
- 1.3 Enhancing collaboration and support.

OUTCOME 2: Multi-Sectoral Knowledge Management

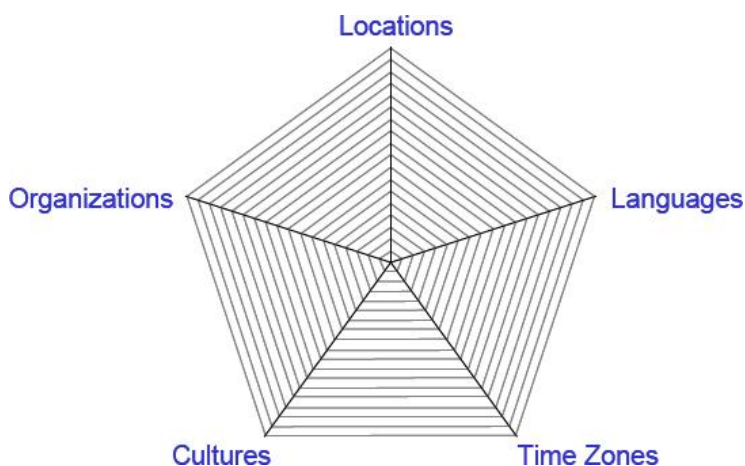
- 2.1 Enhancing knowledge towards reforming attitudes and behaviours.
- 2.2 Strengthening capacity through sharing knowledge and experiences.
- 2.3 Increasing communication and awareness.

OUTCOME 3. National and Regional Plans

- 3.1 Promotion of regional and national demonstration sites and events (best practice and lessons learned).

What?

LCI, like other regional and global initiatives, depends on the participation of interested Member States from a variety of administrative cultures, organisational configurations, time zones, and native languages. This diversity provides different perspectives and ideas which might lead to more innovation, better problem solving, new achievements and competitive advantages. Diversity may, however, also have unfavourable effects on social cohesiveness, communication, and conflict.



In light of the benefits and drawbacks of the implementation complexity, the following activities flow for carrying out the LCI's first phase is recommended as follows:

- Coordinating with the ECO Secretariat to set up an ongoing transparent system of communication through regular meetings and updates.
- Identifying schedule, budget, scope, and quality objectives expected from each of the interested Member States.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities of the team members.
- Conducting site visits to ensure maximum collaboration.
- Initiating communication with regional and international agencies and Public-Private partnerships.
- Developing draft applications for fundraising at regional and sub-regional levels.

Who?

The LCI will be governed, by interested participating member States, as a special project under the direction of the ECO Secretariat with the technical and scientific support of the ECO-IEST. For implementing the first phase of the LCI, it is recommended to use the following coordination mechanism:

LCI Coordinator will be appointed by the ECO Secretary-General and in charge of allocating sufficient management resources for receiving and reviewing reports, keeping the Member States informed

and involved, supervising advisors and support staff, utilising LCI Network, and organising Steering Committee meetings, as well as to decide on any major adjustments. This position is anticipated to be filled by the ECO Director of Energy, Minerals, and Environment.

LCI Focal Points will be appointed by the Lead Agency and acts as the national coordinator in each Member State, in charge of allocating adequate resources, supervising advisors and support staff, organising meetings, engaging relevant National Authorities, and communicating frequently with the LCI Coordinator about the progress being made, any difficulties encountered, or any necessary adjustments that need to be made.

LCI Steering Committee will be composed of the LCI Focal Points and presided over by the LCI Coordinator, serves as the primary driving force and delivery synchronisation mechanism for the LCI. It is suggested that the Steering Committee meets at six-month (or at least annual) intervals, either by teleconference or at a convenient physical meeting.

LCI Network will serve as a consulting mechanism consisting of selected specialists, stakeholder group representatives, research institutions, industrial groups in the development sector, associations of land users, and government and non-government organisations at the regional level. The LCI Steering Committee will review and approve nominations presented by Focal Points based on a balanced representation of disciplines and industries. The LCI Coordinator will chair the LCI Network meetings.

LCI Advisors will be recruited by the ECO-IEST to review and analyse the LCI reports and materials, and serves as the technical consultants to the LCI Coordinator, Focal Points, Steering Committee, and the LCI Network.

When?

Annex-1 describes a thorough activity list comprising a few pre-configured activities with indicators needed to implement and monitor each activity.

In order to keep it flexible enough for implementation, it does **NOT** provide a detailed budget or time period but does outline the key tasks that must be taken or completed.

Cost?

A couple of budget options were addressed at the Antalya meeting (December 2021) and the Secretariat was given the task of estimating the minimum necessary and practical financial requirements for the implementation of the LCI's first phase.

While in the indicative budget planned for the first phase was US\$10.8 million; by separating the costs into in-kind and cash contributions, this Roadmap uses the zero-based budgeting methodology. Since all costs are anticipated to be covered by the Secretariat or the Member States, the expected implementation costs start at \$0. It implies that a cost-benefit analysis should be performed on each budget request. As part of routine monitoring, reporting, and evaluation processes, the budget plans and revisions will be further reviewed at the LCI Coordination Committee's annual meetings.

ANNEX

Activity Plan (1st phase)

OBJECTIVES and PLANNED RESULTS	TARGETS & INDICATORS (OF SUCCESS)	BASELINES	MONITORING	ASSUMPTIONS-RISKS
GOAL: To halt and reverse land degradation and associated impacts in each ECO Member State			M&E records	
PURPOSE: To establish a Collaborative LandCare Initiative across multiple sectors in the participating ECO Member States				
COMPONENT OUTCOME 1.				
COLLABORATION AND SYNERGY IN LANDCARE				
1.1 Regional and national participation	i. Proclamation of LCI as a flagship ECO Program ii. Endorsement of the LCI iii. Briefing materials presented annually iv. LCI Network will be formed.	TBD: current extent of participation in dryland conservation in the 10 Member States TBD: current extent of multi-Sectoral engagement in dryland conservation Limited ECO regional collaboration in sustainable natural resources	records, surveys, polls, results mapping and evaluations	ECO Secretariat establish the LCI. Lead Agencies of interested Member States sign. ECO-IEST establish the technical support mechanism. The multi-Sector approach proves to be highly efficient and effective.
1.2 Recognition for exemplary contributions to LCI	i. Appreciation scheme designed and introduced in Y.1 ii. Major economic sectors support LCI	Limited recognition currently given to exemplary land conservation efforts.	reports	Major economic Sectors engage.
1.3 International collaboration and support	i. Negotiation by ECO, IEST and Lead Agencies in the Member States of significant partnerships for the LCI with relevant international bodies	ECO has not promoted LandCare as a flagship initiative; no international partnerships have been agreed	records and reports	LCI complements current global interests, technical support and financing mechanisms.
COMPONENT 1. ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communications: development of briefing and publicity materials and systematic promotion of the LCI, its process methods and tools, among political leaders and stakeholder groups in each participating Member State. - Extension: establishment of LCI Network with representatives of diverse stakeholder groups. - Promotion: Engagement of major economic sectors. - Manage the LCI appreciation scheme. 				

OBJECTIVES and PLANNED RESULTS	TARGETS & INDICATORS (OF SUCCESS)	BASELINES	MONITORING	ASSUMPTIONS-RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organise publicity and promotional activities. - Develop international Partnerships. - Organise joint activities with international Partners. 				

COMPONENT OUTCOME 2.
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR ENHANCED LANDCARE IN MULTIPLE SECTORS

2.1	Enhanced knowledge and reformed attitudes and behaviours about land degradation and conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Key stakeholders in each participating Member State apply enhanced knowledge to their Sector's planning and management practices ii. Knowledgeable Land-use managers and conservation practitioners are engaged directly in major sectors 	TBD: Amounts of information on land issues currently widely available in the Member States.	Records, reports, surveys and polls	LCI engages competent scientists and experts in land use management and conservation in the Member States.
2.2	Strengthened capacity in land conservation issues and solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Relevant, high-quality LandCare Knowledge materials are widely available to planners and managers in each major Sector ii. LandCare materials are used widely in national education systems iii. LandCare priorities determined and common work plans developed 	TBD: Current levels of public and political understanding of land degradation and conservation issues and science	Records, reports, surveys and polls	LandCare Knowledge materials are brought into wide use in major sectors at the Member States.
2.3	Increased communication and awareness of land degradation and climate impacts, consequences and solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Technical guides to LandCare solutions are produced ii. LandCare reports are produced and publicised 	<p>Report Cards as a management and communications tool are not in current use.</p> <p>TBD: Quantity and quality of relevant Technical guides currently available.</p>	Evaluation materials	Published guides and reports contribute to strengthening effective LandCare.

OBJECTIVES and PLANNED RESULTS	TARGETS & INDICATORS (OF SUCCESS)	BASELINES	MONITORING	ASSUMPTIONS-RISKS	
COMPONENT 2. ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission and publish review of state of scientific knowledge of land management issues in the ECO region, Member States and neighbouring countries. - Survey and compile comprehensive baseline data on land degradation and conservation status in each Member State. - Identify priority awareness, attitudes and activities contributing to land degradation and black spots. - Develop and publish annual reports Cards on the status of land degradation and conservation in each Member States and regionally. - Develop region-wide catalogue and technical guides for best practices in ECO Member States. - LandCare communications target political leaders; public authorities; academia, schools; industry and business leaders - Develop linkages internationally with other land conservation knowledge exchange networks. - Set and apply evaluation criteria for the assessment of good and bad practices in land-use and development sectors. 					
COMPONENT OUTCOME 3.					
LANDCARE ACTION PROGRAMS – SECTORAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL					
3.1	Development and promotion of LandCare Demonstration Sites	Y1-3 Complete establishment of 1-2 Demonstration ‘sites’ for effective LandCare in each participating country.	There are few or no Demonstration sites for land sustainability or conservation in most Sectors in most ECO Member States.	M&E reports on specific practices or sites	LandCare Demonstration Sites are effective in promoting their long-term, widespread replication (in the 2 nd phase Program).
3.2	Preparation of National LandCare Plans	Each Member State prepares a suitable plan for financing by Y3. Plans are collated and integrated the ECO Region.	There are few or no Sector-based, National or Regional Strategic Plans for land conservation and sustainability.	M&E reports Completed Plans	Each Member State undertake planning, co-financing and implementation of a LandCare Plan as a basis for implementing the proposed 2 nd phase.
3.2	Preparation of ECO Regional LandCare (umbrella) Strategy	Plans are collated and integrated for all Sectors in each ECO Member State by Y3.	There is no ECO Regional Action Strategy for LandCare	M&E reports Completed Plans	ECO and its Member States are willing to commit to a Regional LandCare Strategy.
COMPONENT 3. ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of potential LandCare Demonstrations – existing dryland conservation actions and practices being trialled in major economic sectors engaged in land resources use and development. 					

OBJECTIVES and PLANNED RESULTS	TARGETS & INDICATORS (OF SUCCESS)	BASELINES	MONITORING	ASSUMPTIONS-RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - - - - - - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of LandCare Demonstration sites at selected identified sites – in each priority Sector, to provide good national and regional coverage. Preparation of technical and scientific guidance for planning and management of the four principal LandCare strategies. Reform of Destructive land-use and development practices (various Sectors); Strengthening of SLM practices. Rehabilitation/ restoration of degraded drylands, Protection/ conservation of (examples of) Healthy Dryland Ecosystem. Support and facilitation for preparation of LandCare Action Strategy (LCAS) Plans by each priority Sector in each ECO Member State Support and organisation of the national and regional ECO LandCare Action Strategy Complete preparations for development, financing and implementation of the ECO Decade of LandCare (2021-2030) 			