



ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology  
(ECO-IEST)

Project Draft on  
**Combating desertification**  
**with a special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm**  
**in the ECO region**

*10 May 2017*

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## Background

1. Economic Cooperation Organisation (**ECO**) is an intergovernmental regional organisation established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey as the successor of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) (1964-1979) for promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation. In 1992, ECO was expanded to include seven new members, namely: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan .
2. To facilitate cooperation in the fields of ecology and environmental protection within the region was one of the objectives envisaged in the Treaty of Izmir related to the Directorate of Energy, Minerals and Environment (EME) of the Economic Corporation Organisation. Enhancing regional options for tackling climate change mitigation and adaptation issues; and working closely with relevant international actors to find better solutions for shared energy and environmental concerns are some of the main areas of focus of this directorate. The Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2011-2015) for ECO Region, as well as a Project Profile for implementation of the mentioned Plan of Action were adopted in the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (Tehran, Iran, 2011)
3. During the 23rd meeting of the Regional Planning Council (Tehran, 6-8 May 2013), the Council requested the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (**ECO-IEST**) to cooperate with the Secretariat in preparation of a Project proposal aimed at combating desertification, with a special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm in the region. The Council also requested all Member States to contribute to the mentioned proposal with their possible technical and financial assistance.
4. Thereafter, ECO Secretariat in Note No. EME/ENV/IEST/2014/1063 dated 9th July 2014 informed ECO-IEST that during the bilateral talks between ECO Deputy Secretary General and UNEP officials UNEP expressed interest to, among others, possibly assist ECO in implementation of this project and requested the ECO-IEST to make preliminary coordination with the UNEP.
5. In February 2014, ECO-IEST in the Note No. 182-2014 to the ECO Secretariat announced that as it has been estimated, preparing this proposal involves 50000 USD which 25000 USD could be co-financed by the ECO-IEST, and the rest of this amount needs to be provided by other sources.
6. During the Senior Officials Meeting (15-17 November 2014) in Istanbul, the Senior Officials deliberated on the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the Region. Following a presentation and suggestions by the ECO-IEST for the project, the Senior Officials presented their national experiences and discussed the issues such as using the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as a role platform for developing an umbrella project for the ECO region; possible funding from the UNCCD funding mechanisms as well as GEF funding mechanism; experience-sharing among Member States; and the need for strengthening regional approach to combat desertification, including through capacity building and training activities. The Iranian delegation offered to host a training workshop on the issue.
7. During the 5th Eco Ministerial Meeting on Environment (18 November 2014, Istanbul) acknowledging the importance of combating desertification in the Member States and the ECO Region as a whole, the Ministers/HODs request the ECO Secretariat to allocate 50,000 USD from the Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF), for implementing a project with the objective of a detailed needs assessment preparation of the ECO Member States along with the design of the pertinent training/capacity buildings programs and contents.
8. After several meetings and mandates received from the ECO governing bodies, in mid-2016 an agreement signed between the ECO Secretariat and the ECO-IEST for project development phase

include Establishment of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU); Hiring consultant(s) for development of the Project Draft; Feasibility study and/or needs assessment of the Project by using national status reports of the Member States; Conducting meeting(s) for consideration of the Proposal and Finalization of the Project Draft for submission to donor agencies.

9. In 2017, ECO-IEST has initiated implementation of this agreement, and established a small team, including an international consultant, to develop draft materials for a suitable Project proposal in the ECO region Member States.
10. In April 2017, a **Feasibility Study** was compiled summarising available background information relevant to desertification and land degradation in each of the ECO Member States; and a draft Project Proposal was prepared and made available to the ECO Secretariat and each of the Member States, for detailed consideration, development and completion, over the remainder of the year.
11. The proposal prepared by the ECO-IEST and presented in this draft design as a LandCare Initiative, instead of a stand-alone project to enhance scientific knowledge, awareness and capacities of stakeholders in all the Member States, of both the trends in land degradation and the availability of effective long-term solutions – in sustainable land-use, drylands conservation and restoration.
12. With these materials, the ECO-IEST met with senior officials of the ECO Secretariat to review progress and agree on next steps to develop and complete the Project Proposal, including organising a “**project draft consultation workshop**” with relevant participants from each of the Member States. The workshop will be held from **5 to 6 July 2017** at the Secretariat in Tehran. The Secretariat will request the Member States to nominate their representatives to attend the workshop with this note that participants should be well familiar with their national planning mechanisms on land degradation and challenges for biodiversity conservation.

## INTRODUCTION

13. The Economic Cooperation Organisation and its 10 Member States have a shared goal to halt and reverse the processes of land degradation and desertification across their region, and have agreed to collaborate in the development and implementation of a comprehensive large-scale, long-term, high-impact program that is intended to strengthen the ways in which the critical drylands in each of their national territories are managed, used and conserved.
14. The significant common concerns of the ECO and its Member States include the far-reaching and damaging consequences of land degradation including soil erosion, sand storms and dust haze, and the exacerbating effects of climate change impacts, on many aspects of their national economies, peoples' health, well-being and livelihoods, as well as on their natural environments, resources and biodiversity. ECO's focus on economic cooperation underlines the regional group's keen interest in **strengthening knowledge and political and public awareness of the economic and social dimensions of land degradation**, including the costs it imposes on the main sectors of economic and social development; and especially of **the economic and social benefits to be gained by scaling-up effective land conservation measures**.
15. By working together on these significant common problems, the ECO States expect to generate synergies that will strengthen each country's efforts to halt and reverse land degradation.
16. The ECO Institute of Environmental Science & Technology (ECO-IEST) has been requested by its governing Council to design and develop a suitable, collaborative project. The proposal prepared by the ECO-IEST and presented in this draft design as a **LandCare Initiative**<sup>1</sup> instead of a stand alone project: this will comprise a 1<sup>st</sup> phase 3-year LandCare Project that enhances scientific knowledge, awareness and capacities of stakeholders in all the Member States, of both the trends in land degradation and the availability of effective long-term solutions – in sustainable land-use, drylands conservation and restoration.
17. The overall purpose of the ECO LandCare Initiative is to organise and test a framework of regional and national mechanisms, including technical, policy and financial incentives, that will serve to effectively plan, promote, mobilise and coordinate a long-term Program campaign of critical dryland conservation actions in each country. The 1st phase Project is designed to put in place the necessary assessment and knowledge of dryland conservation solutions. Based on review of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase performance and lessons drawn, a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase will be designed and developed as a significant extension and scaling-up of a LandCare Action Program over a further 10 years. The vision is that enhanced knowledge, capacity and collaboration will drive the subsequent *Decade of LandCare*, a program of scaled-up priority LandCare Actions that will effectively halt land degradation across the ECO region.

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<sup>1</sup> The term **LandCare** signifies the participation of multiple stakeholders across many sectors in a collaborative program that will enhance different forms of stewardship and caring for the Land.

## SITUATION & PROBLEM ANALYSIS

*This chapter of the Project proposal will be developed based on inputs received from each of the participating ECO Member States, both prior to and during the proposed consultative Project planning workshop in July 2017*

### The ECO Member States

- ECO and ECO-IEST

18.

### The state of land in each Member State

- Predicted climate change impacts
- Economic, social and environmental consequences
- Review of current land conservation efforts

19.

### Commitments and coordination with other initiatives (global, regional, national)

- International and multilateral Conventions and agreements
- National plans; Linkages with regional and international initiatives

20.

### Current National Targets

21.

## STRATEGY AND RATIONALE

### Concept

22. Dryland degradation is one of the most significant and far-reaching problems affecting all aspects of life – peoples' health and well-being, livelihoods, economic activities, the environment and biodiversity – in each of the ECO Member States<sup>i</sup> and across the broad region of Western and Central Asia. The ECO Member States and their regional neighbours<sup>ii</sup> are vulnerable to land degradation and desertification including soil erosion, dust haze and sand storm, because of their geographic position, prevailing dry climatic conditions and exacerbating effects of climate change.
23. The dominant land type across major parts of the ECO State territories are drylands, characterised by sparse rainfall, periodic drought, wide temperature fluctuations, high evapo-transpiration, wind- and water-driven soil erosion, and highly-adapted native plant and animal communities. The region's extensive dryland zones are important for agriculture, grazing, quarrying, groundwater and other resource extraction, as well as urban and infrastructure development, and nature based tourism. However, these drylands are also ecologically fragile, vulnerable to climate change impacts, and at most risk of being degraded by over-intensive development and inappropriate land-use practices. A summary analysis of the problem of land degradation, and its causes and consequences is in **ANNEX xxx (TBC)**.
24. The ECO Member States have recognised the broad extent and seriousness of the problem and the need to strengthen their responses. Each State has undertaken past and current programs and projects in land-use management and conservation, which have been successful, to varying degrees, and which provide useful lessons for managing the use and conservation of drylands; overall however, these efforts have not yet proved sufficient to halt a downward trend towards desertification.
25. Against this background, the ECO Member States decided to collaborate in a major regional and national initiative to take on the challenge of halting and reversing the processes of land degradation and desertification. The ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST) was requested by the Regional Planning Council to design and develop a suitable, collaborative program, in order to generate synergy through working together to make a significant difference to the ways in which the drylands in each of the ECO States' national territories are managed, used and conserved.
26. The concept is to organize a long-term program of enhanced *Caring for the Land*, to be known as the **ECO LandCare Initiative**, that will enhance regional collaboration and sharing of knowledge, experiences and understanding of land degradation issues and sustainable land-use solutions; as means of significantly strengthening and expanding effective dryland conservation measures in the ECO region. The term LandCare is chosen to signify the inclusive, collaborative approach that the project will follow, involving government, non-government and private sector groups who share a commitment to find sustainable futures for the many users of land in their countries, through cooperation and care.
27. The ECO Initiative will establish a regional and national **LandCare Knowledge Network** as a mechanism to plan, promote and support widespread **LandCare Action Programs** with stakeholders in priority sectors and areas in each participating ECO Member State.
28. The LandCare knowledge exchange and network will share reports nationally and regionally on the baseline condition of the country's drylands; exchange case studies, technical know-how and lessons in dryland restoration, conservation, SLM techniques; and reversing the impacts and consequences of land degradation, including dust haze and sand storm. The LandCare network

will foster engagement and capacity-building among a diverse range of participating agencies and stakeholder groups – government agencies, private sector, NGOs, education and research organisations, and local rural and urban communities – working at national, sub-national and local levels. The Initiative will champion and facilitate technical and financial assistance to support major LandCare Actions in priority sectors, to replicate, scale-up and demonstrate effective techniques in sustainable land management, ecological restoration and conservation.

### Strategic Overview

29. The ECO LandCare Initiative is planned as a 3-year (Establishment phase) Project (2018-2020), leading to a 10-year Program of Actions (Decade of LandCare, 2021-2030), focused initially on identification and subsequently, on replication and scaling-up of the most effective dryland conservation solutions in each of the participating ECO Member States. The plan for the establishment phase Project is described here in detail, with only an outline description of the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> stage Action Program; the detailed planning, budgeting and preparations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage IDC Action Program will be undertaken in Year 2 and 3 of the Establishment Project.
30. The proposed timetable for the two phases, Establishment and Main Phase, of the ECO LandCare Initiative is shown in the table below. ECO-IEST’s intention is to complete the design and secure approvals for the Establishment Project in Year 0 (2017); and start the first phase Project in 2018, with organisation of formal Project Inception in the first half of Year 1 (2018). The LandCare establishment Project will then be implemented intensively over 3 years (2018-2020).
31. For the second, main phase LandCare Action Program (2021-2030), the aim is to complete participatory design of the full Program plan and secure approvals in Year 2 and 3 of the Establishment Project; to convene formal Program Inception at the start of the main phase Year 1 (2021); and to implement the main phase Program of LandCare Actions over a period of 10 years, from 2021 to 2030, which may be termed the *ECO Decade of LandCare*. Subject to comprehensive review and evaluation at the end of this period, a further phase of the ECO LandCare Initiative may be organised, as the *ECO 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade of LandCare*.

### Timetable

		Year	0	1	2	3														
<b>ECO</b>	PLANNING + APPROVALS		■																	
<b>LANDCARE ESTABLISHMENT PROJECT (2018-20)</b>	LANDCARE PROJECT INCEPTION			■																
	COMPONENT 1. COLLABORATION			■	■															
	COMPONENT 2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT			■	■	■														
	COMPONENT 3. INITIAL DC ACTIONS				■	■														
	PLANNING OF MAIN PHASE PROGRAM				■	■														
		Year	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10																	
<b>ECO</b>	ECO-LANDCARE PROGRAM APPROVALS					■														
<b>LANDCARE ACTION PROGRAM MAIN PHASE (2021-30)</b>	PROGRAM INCEPTION					■														
	COLLABORATION					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	IMPLEMENTATION OF LANDCARE ACTIONS					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

32. Recognising the extent and scope of the problems associated with land degradation, desertification and climate change, the ECO Member States will follow a highly focused strategy for the proposed LandCare Initiative: the Initiative will be focused on the **dryland** regions of the participating countries, as these form some of the most important land areas, economically, socially and environmentally, as well as the most sensitive to degradation and climate pressures.
33. The LandCare strategy will “build on success” by identification and scaling-up of **best practices** in dryland conservation from around the region; and it will also adopt a focused campaign-style approach, that will raise political and public **awareness** of the issues, promote and build capacity for effective dryland conservation solutions through outreach programs in priority sectors; nominate LandCare Champions and issue incentive LandCare Awards for exemplary behaviour and inspiring leadership.
34. Through these dual mechanisms of regional and national reporting and knowledge exchange, and on-the-ground demonstration actions, the LandCare Initiative will test, promote and campaign for four main types of Actions to strengthen dryland conservation efforts in the countries:

LandCare Strategic Actions

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions that enhance and extend policies and practices for <b>sustainable and climate resilient dryland management</b></li> <li>• Actions to significantly scale-up <b>dryland ecological restoration</b> activities, especially in priority localities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions that limit or phase-out <b>damaging land-use practices</b>, especially in the most vulnerable dryland parts of the region</li> <li>• Actions to support expansion of effective long-term <b>protection of healthy dryland ecosystems</b></li> </ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

35. Initially the LandCare Project will concentrate on documenting baseline conditions and trends in land degradation; and current sub-national and local efforts to enhance dryland conservation. The focus will be on identification and assessment of past and current ‘success stories’ in dryland conservation, in order to determine scientifically the most practicable and effective solutions. The Project will survey and document ‘Best LandCare practices’ in a small suite of strategies: extending sustainable and climate resilient dryland management; controlling damaging land-use practices; scaling-up effective dryland restoration and healthy dryland ecosystem conservation programs. The identification and assessment of best practices will be done systematically across the multiple sectors and stakeholders involved in each of the countries. The knowledge gained will be used to produce a range of information materials, and shared through the Initiative’s national and regional networking, awareness raising and capacity-building outreach programs.
36. The second focus of Project effort will be to disseminate and use the knowledge to raise political and public interest and awareness of the seriousness of the threats associated with land degradation; of the current ‘baseline’ state of the land; and of the importance of the successful strategies that are identified among the country’s stakeholders; and their potential to make a significant difference through major promotion and scale-up campaigns.
37. Third, using a campaign approach to engage political and public interest, a selection of the most effective strategies will be promoted; and replicated and significantly scaled-up, in priority sectors and priority areas in each country. Technical support will be provided to the delivery of each selected campaign; each will be carefully monitored and evaluated; and lessons will be documented and shared through the LandCare Initiative Knowledge facility and Network.
38. By these means, the ECO LandCare Initiative will support reforms to the current land-use management strategies and practices that have contributed to land degradation: a national and regional campaign will publicise, promote and facilitate replication of the best available

mechanisms and practices of long-term ecologically and socially sustainable land-use and conservation; the Initiative will focus on the most significant land-use sectors and priority dryland areas in each country, and on gaining synergy through the regional collaboration.

39. Capacity development activities supported by the first stage Project will include establishment of information exchange and communications tools across the network; conducting baseline surveys on the current status and recent trends in land degradation and drylands conservation; cataloguing of best practices, demonstration projects and case studies in land management in each of the countries; establishing linkages with existing dryland conservation knowledge exchange networks; and supporting preparation of national action plans for combating land degradation.
40. The outputs from the 1<sup>st</sup> phase will include a fully-prepared plan for the main phase LandCare Program. The aim will be to develop the full plan for the main phase during year 2 of the Establishment project, and to secure approval, resource commitments and financing for the main phase plan during the 3rd year. The plan will be based on what is learned through the establishment phase, and will use a participatory design process involving stakeholders in each of the 10 Member States. National LandCare Action Programs will be planned, to a common design format, and nested within an overall ECO-LandCare Regional Framework.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

41. The planning framework for the ECO-LandCare Establishment Project, which is described in detail below, comprises a high level Goal, a specific Project Purpose, and three main Components, under which Activities are designed to produce clear sets of planned Results, which together lead to the three Component Outcomes. The main elements of the LandCare Project plan are also summarised in the Project Results & Monitoring Framework (logical framework), which forms **ANNEX X (TBC)** to this Project Document.
42. Subsequent sections of the Project plan specify the proposed **Management Arrangements** for implementing the Project; the **Budget/** funds required to implement the range of Activities and produce the sets of planned Results; the proposed mechanism for **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review** of the Project; and an analysis of **Risks** to be managed to ensure that the Project can succeed as planned. A provisional **Implementation Plan** and timetable for the proposed 3-year Project is also outlined, with the intention that a fully-detailed Implementation Plan will be developed and confirmed as part of the **Project Inception** process. A final section of the plan describes the proposed arrangements for **Financing** and co-financing both the Establishment phase and the main scaling-up phase of the ECO-IDC.

### Project Goal

43. The overall, long-term Goal of the ECO LandCare Initiative is **to halt and reverse land degradation and desertification** in each of the ECO Member States and across the broader ECO region.
44. In promoting this Goal, the ECO Governing Council is emphasising the importance for each Member State to reduce the significant economic, social and environmental impacts that are caused, in all sectors, by land degradation and associated widespread dust haze and sand storms, and to recognize and mitigate where possible the exacerbating effects of climate change impacts.
45. Tackling land degradation and climate change impacts effectively is one of the most serious, complex, long-term challenges facing the ECO Member States and their regional neighbours. By participating in the LandCare Initiative, each ECO Member State is making a clear commitment

to do more; to determine and to exchange effective LandCare strategies for dryland conservation; and to seek synergies through strong collaboration across the ECO regional group and a dynamic LandCare Network of practitioners, by actively sharing the know-how, experiences and lessons that will help to address their common challenges.

### Summary Project Framework

<u>ECO-LandCare Establishment Project (2018-2020)</u>	
<b>GOAL</b>	To halt land degradation and desertification in the Central & Western Asia Region
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To establish a collaborative program of best practice LandCare Actions in the ECO Member States
<b>OBJECTIVES and PLANNED RESULTS</b>	<b>INDICATORS-TARGETS</b>
<p><b>OUTCOME 1:</b> COLLABORATION AND SYNERGY in LandCare</p> <p>1.1 Regional and national leadership and participation in the ECO-LandCare Initiative.</p> <p>1.2 Regional and national Champions and Awards for exemplary contributions to the ECO-LandCare Initiative and dryland conservation</p> <p>1.3 International collaboration and support for the ECO-LandCare Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong collaboration in LandCare – multi-country, multi-sector, multi-stakeholder</li> <li>• Active RCG, 10 national FGs</li> <li>• Active diverse LandCare Networks</li> <li>• LandCare Conference</li> <li>• LandCare Champions</li> <li>• LandCare Awards</li> <li>• Active partnerships with international groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>OUTCOME 2:</b> KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT for Land Conservation</p> <p>2.1 Enhanced knowledge on land degradation and conservation, from data-gathering, research, monitoring and reporting</p> <p>2.2 Strengthened communication and awareness of land degradation and climate impacts, consequences and solutions</p> <p>2.3 Strengthened capacity through sharing of knowledge about land conservation issues and solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved knowledge, awareness and capacity for dryland conservation</li> <li>• Comprehensive summary data published in annual IDC Report Cards</li> <li>• Knowledge materials distributed to target audiences</li> <li>• LandCare Educational materials in use in colleges and schools</li> <li>• Technical guides to LandCare solutions</li> <li>• Well-informed land-use managers and conservation practitioners</li> </ul>
<p><b>OUTCOME 3:</b> IDC ACTION PLANS</p> <p>3.1 Initial series of priority LandCare Actions, planned and mobilised as demonstration campaigns</p> <p>3.2 Campaign Plans drawn-up to guide scaling-up of effective LandCare Actions through the 10-year main phase of the ECO-LandCare Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Y2-Y3: 1-2 Demonstration LandCare Actions initiated in each participating country</li> <li>• Y3 Plans approved for a Decade of LandCare - scaling-up priority LandCare Actions in each country.</li> </ul>

## Project Purpose, Outcome Objectives and Planned Results

46. The LandCare (establishment) Project is planned as the first phase of the long-term LandCare Initiative, with the following specific **Purpose**: To establish a collaborative LandCare Action Program, across all sectors in the participating ECO Member States. Through the establishment phase Project, the necessary structures and processes for management and administration will be put in place; mechanisms will be established for collaboration, networking knowledge management and exchange; and a series of first phase LandCare Actions will be developed and implemented.
47. The Project will work towards the following three main Component Outcomes:
- Outcome 1. Collaboration:**  
Strengthened synergy will be achieved, through regional and national coordination and networking, with cooperative engagement and participation in the Initiative, by diverse groups of stakeholders and practitioners in land-use management and conservation, across the participating countries.
- Outcome 2. Knowledge management:**  
Knowledge and understanding will be strengthened, through research, data compilation, communication and exchange; concerning land degradation issues, and sustainable land conservation solutions, in each of the participating countries;
- Outcome 3. Effective LandCare Actions:**  
Through Outcome 1 networks, and based on Outcome 2 findings, an initial series of LandCare Actions will be planned and mobilised as demonstration campaigns. In addition, the main phase LandCare Program will be designed, and Campaign Plans will be drawn-up to guide the promotion, development, and scaling-up of the most effective types of LandCare Actions, in high priority areas, through the 10-year main phase of the ECO-Initiative.
48. The main Results expected under Outcome 1. Collaboration include: **1.1 Regional and national leadership and participation in the ECO-LandCare Initiative**; this will be achieved through the activities of a regional LandCare Coordinating Group, comprised of one regional and 10 national LandCare Coordinators; and a LandCare Focus Group and Network in each country, comprising selected experts representing research institutions, land-user associations, government and non-government organisations; and national and local stakeholder groups engaged in land-use, management and/or conservation, in each of the Member States. The Coordinators and Focus Groups will be responsible collectively for guiding, facilitating, monitoring and reporting on the planned LandCare Project activities.
49. The second Result planned under Outcome 1. is **1.2 Regional and national Champions and Awards** for exemplary contributions to dryland conservation. The Project will set up an objective mechanism by which individuals and organisations who make outstanding contributions to the LandCare cause and who inspire others, may be nominated and recognised by their peers. The Project mechanism will appoint numbers of Patrons, Champions and Ambassadors, and will give series of LandCare Awards to recognise exemplary individuals and groups. The Awards scheme will be used to highlight success stories across the region, and to publicise and enhance participation in the LandCare Initiative in each participating country.
50. The third main Result under Outcome 1. will be **1.3 International collaboration and support for the ECO-LandCare Initiative**. Partnerships will be developed between the LandCare Initiative and relevant international agencies; the LandCare Networks will establish links with other international networks that offer mutual support towards implementing effective strategies for tackling land degradation, desertification, and dryland conservation; and knowledge resource

materials will be exchanged nationally, regionally and internationally through the LandCare Knowledge Centre (Outcome 2.).

51. Under Outcome 2. Knowledge management, the following three linked main Results are planned: **2.1 Enhanced knowledge** about land degradation and conservation, achieved through increased data-gathering, research, monitoring and reporting; **2.2 Strengthened communication and awareness** of land degradation and climate impacts, consequences and solutions; and **2.3 Improved accessibility, availability and sharing of knowledge** about land conservation issues and solutions. Outcome 2. will be the core Component of the LandCare Project, focused on systematically strengthening the analysis, recording, promotion and sharing of knowledge, about land degradation, and about sustainable solutions to reverse land degradation and strengthen dryland management, restoration and conservation. Important indicators of the success of this component will include increased knowledge and capacity of land-use managers and conservation practitioners to implement effective dryland conservation actions; and increased awareness and understanding of dryland conservation issues and solutions, among political and community leaders in the Member States.
52. To achieve these Results, the Project will create an **ECO-Regional LandCare Centre and Knowledge extension and capacity-building programs**: Web-based information and knowledge resources will be compiled from national and regional monitoring and status reports; shared across the LandCare Networks in each participating country and with partners; and will be used to highlight both progress in dryland conservation achievements, and any outstanding issues in the participating countries. For Result 2.1, the Project will commission, research and compile Knowledge products, including data reports from baseline surveys; case study reviews and cost:benefit analyses; published report cards; and technical guides for replication and scaling-up of selected best practices and policy measures for effective dryland conservation. For planned Result 2.2, communications and education tools will include an ECO-LandCare Website; wide dissemination of published LandCare Report Cards; LandCare materials for schools and colleges; publicity for LandCare demonstration sites and for the Awards scheme; and similar activities organised by the Knowledge Centre through the ECO-LandCare Coordination Group and Focus Groups. Planned Result 2.3 will be aimed at using improved LandCare knowledge products to strengthen capacity, effectiveness and efficiency, primarily among the diverse land use, management and conservation practitioners who will be engaged through the LandCare Network.
53. The main Results planned under Outcome 3. Effective LandCare Actions will be **3.1 Initial series of LandCare Actions**, which will be planned and mobilised during the first phase Establishment Project to illustrate and promote the underlying ECO-LandCare concepts and purpose; and as a test and demonstration of the Initiative's management procedures; and **3.2 LandCare Action Campaign Plans** drawn-up to guide the 10-year main phase of ECO-LandCare that will follow the Establishment phase Project.
54. The purpose of the main phase ECO-LandCare program will be to drive a Decade of LandCare, to support the significant scaling-up of the most effective and sustainable LandCare Actions, which will be identified and assessed through the knowledge management mechanisms started under the first phase Project and continued through the main phase. The concept for the main phase program is to focus support on a small number of LandCare solutions that have been assessed as being most effective in tackling the priority land degradation and conservation issues identified in the participating ECO Member States. Through this approach, 'model' Action campaigns will be planned, implemented, monitored and publicised in a number of priority areas and sectors.
55. Under planned Result 3.2, the Campaign Plans for scaling-up selected LandCare Actions will be based on what has been developed and learned through the establishment phase Project, namely the best practices and/or policy solutions identified and assessed under Component 2. Knowledge management. In particular, the Campaign Plans will specify the mechanisms by

which the selected LandCare Actions will be replicated and scaled-up in the second phase. As part of 3.2, the Project will facilitate participatory planning and budgeting among Focus Group and Network members, to develop the campaign plan for the scaled-up LandCare Action, to a common design format. The target will be to develop the main phase LandCare Campaign Plans during year 2 of the Establishment Project; then to secure approval, resource commitments and financing during year 3; so that continuity and momentum may be maintained by starting the main phase ECO-LandCare Program in the following year.

## **Project Monitoring & Evaluation,**

### **Reporting, Review, Lessons and Adaptive Management**

56. The 3-year LandCare Project is designed to achieve a number of objectives, by implementing activities within a specified timeframe and budget, to produce sets of agreed major Results that together will comprise progress towards three main Component Outcomes, the Project Purpose and the overall Goal.
57. Project management procedures, overseen by the regional and national Coordinators, will include routine monitoring and reporting, and periodic review and evaluation (MRR&E), in order to systematically assess progress with implementation and towards achieving each of the planned Results, Targets and Outcomes. These MRR&E processes will be based on the Project Results and Monitoring Framework (ANNEX X (TBC) in the Project Document), which specifies Indicators and monitoring methods alongside the hierarchy of Activities, Results and Outcome objectives.
58. The **Monitoring and evaluation** plan for the LandCare Project comprises the following:
  - a. Routine record-keeping and reporting (weekly-monthly-quarterly) by each Project staff member, contractor and consultant;
  - b. Periodic (quarterly and annual) collation and publication of reported data by the regional and national LandCare Coordinators, who together will form the Project's Senior Executive Team; plus the Knowledge Coordinator and Managers, and Focal Group members;
  - c. At 6-month intervals, the Senior Executive Team in conjunction with the LandCare Project Director (ECO-IEST) will review all aspects of the Project's progress in each country and collectively; this review will draw conclusions and lessons that will be used to continually 'adaptively manage' the Project, through periodic adjustments to the Project's implementation plan, budget and/ or overall Project Framework.
  - d. At 6-month and annual intervals, major Project achievements, highlights and adjustments to future plans will be reported by the Project Coordination Office and ECO-IEST to the ECO governing Committee for the LandCare Initiative.

## **Risk Assessment**

59. A preliminary assessment of potential Risks – that the LandCare Project may not be able to proceed as planned or may not achieve the expected Results and Outcomes – is summarised in the table below.
60. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed and updated as part of the proposed Project Inception process; and modifications to the Project plan may be made at that time, if necessary. The Project management and ECO-IEST will need to manage each of these Risks, during Project development and implementation, by adjustments to the Project proposal, logical framework, implementation plan and budget.

RISKS to the LandCare Project	RISK MANAGEMENT
<p>A There is a risk that not all ECO Member States will support and participate in the ECO LandCare Initiative.</p>	<p>The ECO governing body and ECO-IEST will encourage the full collaboration of all Member States.</p> <p>The ECO LandCare Initiative will only proceed if a majority of the Member States confirm their commitments.</p>
<p>B Stakeholders and lead agencies in the various sectors may not be willing or able to actively participate and contribute to the planned Project.</p>	<p>The Project plan, activities, budget and support mechanisms will be designed and managed to enable a wide range of stakeholder groups to engage and participate.</p>
<p>C Accurate data (on land-use patterns; land degradation and its impacts in all sectors; land conservation policy, projects and practices) may not be readily available in each country.</p>	<p>An essential part of the ECO LandCare Initiative is to collect, share and publish accurate data, in order to strengthen collaboration and synergy. ECO-IEST and the Project management will seek agreements with all participating countries and partner agencies on research and data-sharing.</p>
<p>D It may be difficult to secure financing and co-financing for all planned Project activities.</p>	<p>All ECO Member States and internal and external partners will be asked to commit and allocate funds to the LandCare Initiative in line with the financing plan negotiated by the ECO governing council and ECO-IEST.</p>
<p>E Capacities may be weak for some aspects of Project management, at local, country and/ or regional levels.</p>	<p>Clear ToR and selection criteria will be agreed and should be complied with in all Project recruitment, procurement and issuance of grants and awards.</p> <p>Performance reviews will be conducted and supplementary training will be provided where necessary.</p>
<p>F External factors (climate, political, social, economic) may disrupt Project planning and/ or implementation.</p>	<p>Project implementation, performance and achievements will be subject to routine monitoring and evaluation; M&amp;E reports will be used to make adjustments periodically to the Project and activity plans.</p>

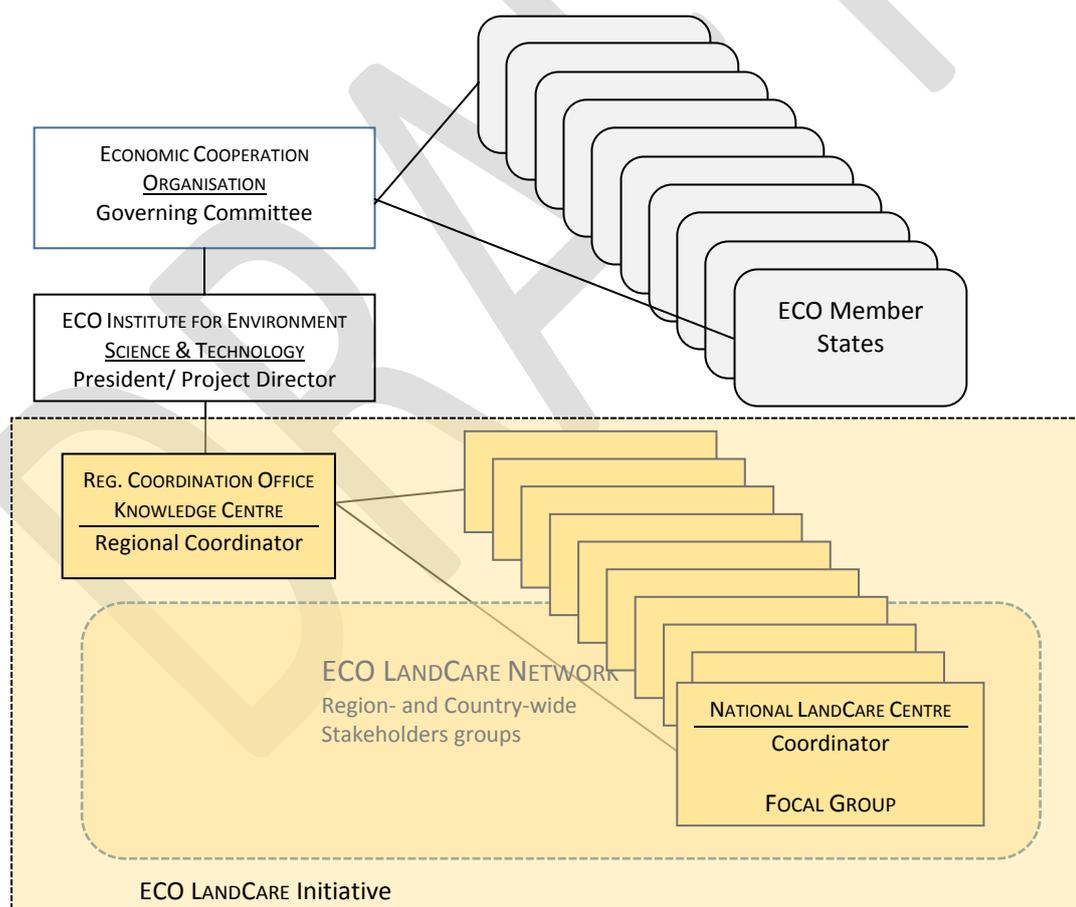
### Outline Description of a 10-year Program of Actions

61. It is proposed that the 3-year Establishment Project will lead on to a 10-year Program of Actions in each participating country, subject to the Project's review (year 3), and approval of the detailed Program plan and financing agreement that is to be prepared in years 2 and 3 of the Project.
62. The concept for the 10-year IDC Program is to facilitate replication and significant scaling-up of a selected set of LandCare Actions in each of the participating ECO Member States. The selected Actions will have been identified and evaluated as the most effective and sustainable solutions to the priority problems being caused by land degradation.
63. The 10 year LandCare Program of Actions will be promoted as the ECO Decade of LandCare. The Program will work through the members of the LandCare Focus Groups and Network, to stimulate interest, activity and support for an increasingly broad scope of priority LandCare Actions, among a wide range of stakeholders in each country – government and non-government; local land resource users and communities; multiple economic sectors.

## MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

64. The ECO LandCare Initiative will be developed and governed, for all participating Member States, as a special project under the direction of the Economic Cooperation Organisation and leadership of its Institute of Environment Science & Technology, ECO-IEST. The Initiative will be implemented in two phases, a 3-year LandCare Establishment Project followed by a 10-year LandCare Action Program.
65. The ECO-IEST will establish a management structure that will operate for the life of the Project and the subsequent main phase Program, comprising a small **regional LandCare Coordination** unit; and a **National LandCare Centre**, Coordinator and **Focus Group** in each of the participating Member States. The Coordinators and Focus Groups will promote and support an extensive LandCare **Network** of stakeholder groups engaged in all aspects of land-use management and conservation-related work, in different sectors, across the 10 participating countries. The overall management structure for the ECO LandCare Initiative is summarised in the chart below.

Project Organisation Chart



### Project Governance and Supervision

66. The Governing Council of the Economic Cooperation Organisation will nominate a sub-Committee of national officials to serve as the LandCare Initiative **governing Committee**, to be responsible to the Governing Council and the 10 Member States, for approving the Project document and the annual Project Implementation Plan and Budget; and for receiving and noting

Annual Reports and major Reviews from the ECO-IEST President/ Project Director, LandCare Coordinator and senior executive team. To carry out these responsibilities, the governing Committee will receive regular communications from the ECO-IEST, and will convene at 6-month and annual intervals, either by tele-conference or at a convenient physical meeting.

67. The **ECO-IEST** and Project Coordination Office will provide secretariat services and regular information to the governing Committee, primarily by the timely sharing of reports, plans and items of Project news. The ECO-IEST President or a suitable delegate will serve part-time as the **Project Director**, in the course of regular IEST duties. The Project Director's principal functions will be to keep the Board members informed and engaged; and to convene regular meetings with the LandCare Coordinator and senior executive team, to review performance and progress with Project implementation, and to decide on any major adjustments to the Plan and Budget that are necessary.
68. The ECO-IEST, through the President or a suitable senior Finance Officer, will serve also as the main budget holder and financial administrator for the LandCare Project. Primarily this will involve holding the funds and overseeing expenditure for the Project's regional and multi-country activities. As discussed in the Project Document section on Financial Administration, the National Coordinators' offices will serve as the budget holders and administrators for the Project funds in each country.
69. In addition the ECO-IEST will be responsible for finding suitable premises to house the LandCare Coordination Office and for assisting the Office to procure the necessary facilities and equipment for its operations.

### Project Management

70. The majority of Project activities and management and administrative functions will be carried out by a small team of Project staff, appointed to the regional **Coordination Office** and the **National Centre** in each of the participating countries.
71. The regional Coordination Office will be headed by a full-time Coordinator, supported by the Knowledge Coordinator, and Administration Manager. Their responsibility will be to plan, manage, monitor and report on implementation of the Project activities, Project administration and finances; in collaboration with the National Centres and Focus Groups, and with the ECO-IEST. The regional Coordinator and national Coordinators will form the LandCare Senior Executive Team, which will work routinely as a virtual team using electronic communications, with occasional physical meetings in association with a LandCare event in one of the participating countries.
72. In each country, a National LandCare Centre will be established as an auxiliary facility to a suitable national institution (university, research or government agency). The National Centre will be staffed with a part-time Coordinator, who may be seconded from a national institution, and a full-time Knowledge Manager, Technical support officer and Administrative support officer. Their job will be to manage the LandCare Project activities in the country, and to ensure development of strong regional collaboration.
73. The proposed LandCare Project staff positions are listed in the table below, for the ECO-IEST, regional Coordination Office, and National Centres. Draft Position Descriptions for each proposed position are provided in the Project proposal **ANNEX xxx (TBC)**. Detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) will be developed as part of the process of finalisation of the Project proposal and financing. Short-term consultants and grants will be used to implement Project tasks in each country, including the planned surveys, research, reviews and analyses; and development of knowledge and awareness-raising materials and technical guides.
74. An important feature of the LandCare Initiative will be formation of a **Focus Group** in each country, comprised of 10-15 experts and stakeholder representatives, paid a small stipend and

expenses to work part-time on the LandCare Initiative. The Focus Group will function as the expert consultative forum for the LandCare Initiative in the country, providing expert advice and guidance on all aspects of the national program and regional links. The National Centre staff and Focus Group members will engage a range of the country's land-use stakeholder groups and practitioners, to form an extensive country-wide **LandCare Network**. The Knowledge Managers will work together with the Focus Group members to establish and develop the LandCare Knowledge Centre, including regional, national (and local) hubs; and to promote, create and support the LandCare Network of national and local stakeholders.

75. The Focus Group will assist the LandCare Centre to function as a national centre of excellence, and as the focal point for the development and coordination of LandCare campaigns and Actions. The activities organised by the Centre and Focus Group will include a systematic program of data-gathering for the Knowledge centre: technical and scientific surveys and case studies; assessments and documentation of baseline conditions, existing land-use management and conservation projects, and best practices in dryland conservation, in each relevant sector. These activities will be linked to national and local monitoring and reporting across the ECO region LandCare Initiative.

### Project Staff List

Institutional base	Position Title	No.	Duration	Location
ECO-IEST	PROJECT DIRECTOR	1	3 years, part-time	Tehran
	FINANCE OFFICER	1	3 years, part-time	
LandCare Coordination Office	REGIONAL COORDINATOR	1	3 years, full-time	t.b.d.
	KNOWLEDGE COORDINATOR	1	3 years, full-time	
	ADMINISTRATOR	1	3 years, full-time	
LandCare National Centre	NATIONAL COORDINATOR	10	3 years, part-time	in each country
	KNOWLEDGE MANAGER	10	3 years, full-time	
	SUPPORT OFFICER	10	3 years, full-time	
LandCare Focus Groups	nominated experts and representatives			in each country
LandCare Network	LANDCARE GRANT RECIPIENTS & CONSULTANTS	n	200-days per year/ per country	in each country

## PROJECT BUDGET & FINANCING PLAN

### Project Budget Plan

76. The ECO Initiative in Dryland Conservation will be implemented as an initial Project over 3 years; subjected to review and evaluation; and leading on to a 10-year campaign program to promote, replicate and enhance a selection of the most effective long-term solutions to dryland conservation.
77. The budget planned for the first phase LandCare Project is based on the planned activities and arrangements for management and implementation, as detailed in this Project Proposal. The detailed budget plan is in **ANNEX xxx (TBC)** and a summary of this budget is shown in the table below. Once confirmed at the end of the Project design period, these budget plans will be used as the basis for negotiating financial contributions from countries and partners to implement the LandCare Project. The finalised budget will be reviewed by the Project management, ECO-IEST and governing Committee, and adjusted as required as part of the Project Inception.

### Summary Budget (3 years, 10 countries) – working draft 15 March 2017

COMPONENT Cost-Centre	Costs - YEAR 1		Costs - YEAR 2		Costs - YEAR 3		TOTAL COSTS / 3 years		BUDGET TOTALS 3 yr, 10 countries
	Regional	/Country	Regional	/Country	Regional	/Country	Regional	/Country	
LandCare Initiative MANAGEMENT									
Governance and Supervision	60,000	-	60,000	-	60,000	-	180,000	0	180,000
Regional Coordination	264,000	-	243,000	-	243,000	-	750,000	0	750,000
National Centres	-	99,000	-	78,000	-	78,000	0	255,000	<u>2,550,000</u>
									<b>3,480,000</b>
COMPONENT 1. COLLABORATION									
LandCare Focus Groups	-	110,000	-	110,000	-	110,000	0	330,000	3,300,000
LandCare Network development	-	64,000	-	89,000	-	64,000	0	217,000	<u>2,170,000</u>
									<b>5,470,000</b>
OUTCOME 2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT									
Knowledge Centres	102,000	92,000	74,000	64,000	74,000	64,000	250,000	220,000	2,450,000
Data-gathering	-	160,000	-	160,000	-	160,000	0	480,000	4,800,000
Knowledge sharing	65,000	42,500	65,000	42,500	65,000	42,500	195,000	127,500	1,470,000
Capacity building	20,000	92,000	20,000	92,000	20,000	92,000	60,000	276,000	<u>2,820,000</u>
									<b>11,540,000</b>
OUTCOME 3. LandCare ACTIONS and Plans									
LandCare Actions	0	0	0	210,000	0	210,000	0	420,000	4,200,000
Main phase Planning	0	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	<u>550,000</u>
									<b>4,750,000</b>
	511,000	659,500	462,000	845,500	512,000	870,500	1,485,000	2,375,500	
x 10		6,595,000		8,455,000		8,705,000		23,755,000	
Budget Totals ANNUAL	7,106,000		8,917,000		9,217,000		25,240,000		<b>25,240,000</b>

78. The budget is planned as a results-based budget: the total budget required to deliver the planned results, over the three years of the Project, in the 10 ECO Member States, is approximately \$ 25 million, which is equivalent to an average annual budget per country of approximately \$ 840,000. The summary budget table above and the detailed budget plan in **ANNEX X (TBC)** present the breakdown of these planned costs into the budgets required to deliver each Component and each main set of Activities and Results in the participating countries and in each year of the LandCare Project.

79. The planned budget for **Component 1. Collaboration** is \$ 5.5 million, equivalent to approximately \$ 180,000 in each country per year – to organise and support a LandCare Focus Group, and an extensive LandCare stakeholders Network in each country.
80. The planned budget for the Project’s core **Component 2. Knowledge Management** is \$ 11.5 million, equivalent to approximately \$ 380,000 in each country per year – to conduct substantial gathering, analysis and representation of technical and scientific data on land-use, status, baselines and trends in degradation, restoration and conservation; operate national and regional hubs of a LandCare Knowledge Network; prepare and disseminate a range of Information and Knowledge products; deliver capacity-building technical workshops, seminars, courses and conferences.
81. The planned budget for the Component 3. LandCare Actions and Plans is \$ 4.7 million, equivalent to around \$ 160,000 in each country per year – to facilitate development and implementation of a small number of LandCare Actions, as test-cases and demonstrations of the LandCare Initiative concepts and methodology, in priority sectors and areas in each of the participating countries. In addition under this Component, the project will organise for the comprehensive review of the 3-year first phase Project, plus participatory planning and design of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the LandCare Initiative, a 10-year Program of LandCare Actions.

### **Project Financing Plan**

82. The broad strategy for financing the ECO LandCare Initiative is for the Member States to contribute 80% of the funds required, and for the remaining 20% to be contributed in the form of grants from the international financing mechanisms supporting implementation of the multilateral agreements on biodiversity conservation; sustainable land management; climate change adaptation.
83. ....

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & BUDGET

### Summary Work Program and Costs

84. The ECO-LandCare Project will involve establishment of a regional Coordination office, a national LandCare Centre, and engagement of an expert Focus Group in each of the participating countries.
85. Through these offices and groups, the Project will conduct a range of surveys and studies in each country, to gather and analyse information on the status of land and land-use, stakeholder groups in land-use management and conservation; and to document the baseline status and trends of land degradation and of land conservation efforts and land-use and conservation.
86. Knowledge 'centres' comprising a LandCare Website, GIS and Newsletters will be used to create and build capacity across an extensive LandCare Network of practitioners and groups active in different sectors and countries across the ECO region.

LandCare Project – Summary Work Program	Annual Costs <sup>2</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECO Governance</li> <li>• Regional Coordination Group</li> <li>• National Centres</li> </ul>	\$ 1,010,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• LandCare Network</li> </ul>	\$ 1,100,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-site</li> <li>• e-Newsletter</li> <li>• ECO-LandCare Conference</li> <li>• Champions Scheme</li> <li>• Awards Scheme</li> </ul>	\$ 400,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LandCare Knowledge facility, Web, hubs</li> <li>• Knowledge Surveys, studies, analyses, polls and reports</li> <li>• Baseline and monitoring data records</li> <li>• LandCare Report Cards</li> <li>• LandCare Information materials</li> <li>• Knowledge review sector workshops</li> <li>• Knowledge materials design and production</li> <li>• Outreach events (field-days, seminars, courses)</li> </ul>	\$ 3,850,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LandCare Pilot-Demo Actions</li> <li>• LandCare Program main phase Plan</li> </ul>	\$ 1,580,000
<b>Total Annual Cost – approx.</b>	<b>\$ 8,400,000</b>

<sup>2</sup> Project cost estimates are average annual costs, with full participation of 10 ECO Member States.

## ANNEXES (TBC)

Project Results and Monitoring Framework

Project Budget Plan

Project Financing Plan

Country and Sector Background

Map

*to be determined:*

*Major Related Projects*

*Legal Context*

*Government Obligations*

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<sup>i</sup> The Economic Cooperation Organisation's Member States are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

<sup>ii</sup> Neighbouring countries in Central and West Asia share similar geographic and climatic conditions and vulnerabilities to dryland degradation, and the same damaging consequences for human health, livelihoods, the economy and the environment.