



Project Development Consultation Workshop on

“Combating desertification with a special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm in the ECO region”

5-6 July 2017

ECO Secretariat, Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Background

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 .

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 ECO Directorate of Energy, Minerals and Environment (EME). Enhancing regional options for tackling climate change mitigation and adaptation issues; and working closely with relevant international actors to address shared energy and environmental concerns. The ECO Region Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2011-2020) and associated Project Profile were adopted at the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (Tehran, Iran, 2011).

The 23rd meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (Tehran, 6-8 May 2013 requested the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST) to cooperate with the Secretariat in preparation of a Project proposal to combat desertification in the ECO region, with special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm. The Council also requested all Member States to contribute to the mentioned proposal with their possible technical and financial assistance.

On 9 July 2014, the ECO Secretariat informed ECO-IEST (Note EME/ENV/IEST/2014/1063) that during bilateral talks between ECO Deputy Secretary General and UNEP officials, UNEP

expressed possible interest in assisting ECO to implement this project, and requested the ECO-IEST to make contact with the UNEP.

From 15-17 November 2014, in Istanbul, the ECO Senior Officials Meeting deliberated on the proposed Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm. Following a presentation and suggestions by ECO-IEST, the Senior Officials presented their national experiences and discussed issues such as using the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as a 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 approaches to combat desertification, including through capacity building and training activities. The Iranian delegation offered to host a training workshop on the issue.

On 18 November 2014 the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment acknowledged the importance of combating desertification in the Member States and the ECO Region as a whole, and the Ministers/HODs requested the ECO Secretariat to allocate USD 50,000 USD from the Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF), to develop a project proposal including a detailed needs assessment of the ECO Member States, and design of pertinent training/capacity building programs.

In September 2016, after several meetings and mandates received from the ECO governing bodies, an agreement was signed between the ECO Secretariat and the ECO-IEST for the project development phase, which would include (i) Establishment of a Project Coordination Unit (PCU); (ii) Hiring consultant(s) for development of the Project Draft; (iii) Feasibility study and/or needs assessment of the Project by using national status reports of the Member States; (iv) Conducting meeting(s) for consideration of the Proposal and Finalization of the Project Draft for submission to donor agencies.

Project Proposal Development

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 aimed at combating desertification in the ECO region Member States, with emphasis on dust haze and sand storms.

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.

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.

Workshop Plan

The **Purpose** of the Workshop is to develop the Project Proposal aimed at combating desertification in the ECO region, through consultation with the experts from interested Member States.

The Workshop **Objectives** are:

1. Review the Problem: To summarise relevant national data and information, and share preliminary understanding of the current status and trends of land degradation, desertification, land-use, management and conservation in each of the participating Member States.
2. Review Proposed Solutions: To review and assess potential solutions and program strategies to tackle the priority problems identified.
3. Complete development of the draft Project Proposal: To review the proposed Project Concept and strategy, and develop a complete draft Project Proposal for implementation in the participating Member States.

Who Might Attend the Workshop?

This workshop is planned to consult with the experts from interested Member States to share their data and information on the situation of land degradation and biodiversity conservation in the ECO Region and to review the project draft. Therefore, participants should be well familiar with their national planning mechanisms on land degradation and challenges for biodiversity conservation. It should be also noted that the workshop working language and all related documents will be in English.

Participant Preparations

The Workshop participants representing each of the Member States are requested to make the following preparations in advance of the Workshop, and to bring along the prepared data and information, as inputs to the workshop and to the development of the Project Proposal:

Compilation of available national data and baseline information on the following range of relevant topics:

- Land resources and land-use sectors, patterns and trends; distribution and state of Drylands, including soil erosion, dust haze and sand storm;

- Dryland agriculture, forestry, grazing, quarrying, groundwater and other resource extraction, urban and infrastructure development, nature based tourism. land-use practices;
- Data on effects of land degradation on peoples' health and well-being, livelihoods, economic activities, the environment and biodiversity;
- Climatic conditions and trends;
- National and local stakeholders interested in and relevant to Drylands conservation, land management and the LandCare Initiative;
- Past and current programs and projects relevant to land-use management and conservation; information on successes and lessons for managing the use and conservation of drylands.

Workshop Follow-up

Within an agreed time period following the Workshop, the Workshop participants representing each of the Member States will be asked to complete their write-up of specific items that arose in the Workshop, for inclusion in the complete Project Proposal document being developed by the ECO-IEST team.

Important Dates

Deadline for nomination of Participants	31 May 2017
Deadline for comments on the Feasibility study and the Project Draft	15 June 2017
Deadline for travel arrangements of Participants	15 June 2017
Arrival of the Delegations:	04 July 2017
First Day of Workshop:	05 July 2017
Second Day of Workshop:	06 July 2017
Departure of the Delegations:	07 July 2017

Travel Arrangements

The ECO Secretariat will reimburse the cost of one round trip air ticket (up to USD 900 for economy class on the most direct route) for one participant from each Member States. The participants are requested to send their unpurchased flight itineraries to the ECO-IEST by 15. June 2017.

Accommodation & Local Hospitality

The ECO-IEST will provide the accommodation for 3 nights (4th, 5th and 6th of July 2017) for one delegate from each ECO Member States who will be officially nominated and participated in this workshop. Further local hospitality including meals will be covered by the Institute.

Visa

Any of participants who require visa to enter the Islamic Republic of Iran, need to apply for their visa at the Iranian Embassy/ Consulate in their home country. Those who require any assistance in this matter should contact the Institute by end of May 2017.

Language of Workshop

The official language of the Workshop will be in English. However, some assistive Russian languages translation would be provided by the ECO Secretariat.

Contacts

All questions related to Workshop should be addressed to:

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Workshop Agenda

DURATION	AGENDA TOPIC	GOAL
Day 1: Wednesday 5 July 2017 Morning session	Introductions, workshop purpose/goals, review agenda & ground rules	Understand why we are here & the workshop approach and agenda
	Land Degradation Problem Analysis	Participatory review and mapping of Land degradation issues
	Summary Situation Analysis	Review of baseline situation in each ECO Member State
Day 1: Wednesday 5 July 2017 Afternoon session	Review of Potential Solutions	Participatory analysis of potential solutions and strategies for tackling priority problems Preliminary mapping of local and national Stakeholders
	Outputs from Day 1	Compile and review summary outputs from Day 1 sessions
Day 2: Thursday 6 July 2017 Morning session	Proposed Project Concept and Strategy	Discuss and confirm the overall LandCare Initiative concept and program strategy
	Proposed Project Framework	Review and develop the proposed Project Framework
Day 2: Thursday 6 July 2017 Afternoon session	Project Governance, Management and Finances	Review and develop the Management, Implementation & Financing Arrangements for the proposed ECO LandCare Initiative
	Confirmation of Workshop Outputs and Next Steps	Identification of outputs and completion tasks Next steps planned and assigned
	Meeting Evaluation	Workshop evaluation and feedback to ECO-IEST.