EcoPeace Middle East

Strategic Five Year Plan, 2017-2021
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About EcoPeace

Who We Are
EcoPeace is a unique organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmentalists. Our primary objective is the promotion of cooperative efforts to protect our shared environmental heritage. In so doing, we seek to advance sustainable regional development and to create the necessary conditions for lasting peace in our region. EcoPeace has offices in Amman, Bethlehem and Tel Aviv.

Our Core Values

- Water Security
- The Two State Solution
- Regional Integration
- Mutual Respect
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Gender Equality
- Non-Violence
Our Vision
EcoPeace’s vision is to secure a sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the people of the Middle East.

Our Mission
EcoPeace develops crossborder environmental solutions by working with constituencies and building partnerships in the Middle East and in other global regions that foster a collective commitment to a sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future.
The EcoPeace Approach

EcoPeace is an international trailblazer in the practical application of environmental peacebuilding to advance water security. We recognize that shared natural resources are an important opportunity to broaden and deepen areas of cooperation and trust even in the midst of conflict. Solutions to environmental problems are rarely zero-sum; solving them not only positively effects the region’s ecology, but its social and economic stability as well. By collaborating on environmental and water security problems, an understanding between conflicting parties and a willingness to establish interdependence is forged. These set the foundations for the development of mutual prosperity and trust, and ultimately for peace.

Our approach is unique in its synergy between Top-Down policy change and Bottom-Up community based constituency building. Joined together they maximize impact and create new political will.
What is Water Security?

The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability.

Working definition, UN-Water, 2013

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Adequate legal regimes, institutions, infrastructure and capacity are in place.

TRANSCENDENT COOPERATION

Sovereign states discuss and coordinate their actions to meet the varied and sometimes competing interests for mutual benefit.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Adequate water supplies are available for food and energy production, industry, transport and tourism.

DRINKING WATER AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Populations have access to safe, sufficient and affordable water to meet basic needs for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene, to safeguard health and well-being, and to fulfill basic human rights.

ECOSYSTEMS

Ecosystems are preserved and can deliver their services, on which both nature and people rely, including the provision of freshwater.

WATER-RELATED HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Populations are resilient to water-related hazards including floods, droughts and pollution.

FINANCING

Innovative sources of financing complement funding by the public sector, including investments from the private sector and micro-financing schemes.

Peace and political stability

The negative effects of conflicts are avoided, including reduced water quality and/or quantity, compromised water infrastructure, human resources, related governance, and social or political systems.

Water is central to achieving a larger sense of security, sustainability, development and human well-being. UN-water supports the inclusion of water security in the post-2015 development agenda as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Achieving water security requires collaboration across sectors, communities, disciplines and political borders, to reduce the risk of potential conflicts over water resources, between sectors and between water users or states.
Refusing to Accept the Status Quo

EcoPeace has often taken on what was seen as impossible. We were told that fresh water would never flow in the Lower Jordan River, yet in 2013, following a decade of EcoPeace advocacy, a precedent was set and fresh water was allowed to flow from the Sea of Galilee to the Jordan River; it continues to do so till this day.

We are the only organization whose activities stopped the construction of the separation barrier between Israel and Palestine as we stood up to protect the World Heritage landscape in Battir.

We continue to insist before decision makers that it is not possible to disengage from our shared environment, be it in reference to Gaza or to anywhere else in our small region.

Over the next five years our refusal to accept the status quo will remain unchanged, and we will focus heavily on water security and on advancing the peace process. Our objective will be to reach a new agreement on Israeli-Palestinian natural water allocation and management, and to advance Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli cooperation in the Jordan Valley.
Overarching Objectives of this Strategic Plan

EcoPeace Middle East operates under a 5-year strategic planning process. This new Strategic Plan for the years 2017-2021 builds on our earlier 5-year plan while responding to feedback, new needs and a changing geopolitical climate. Extensive interviews and discussions with staff, board members and external stakeholders serve as the basis for the development of this strategy. Our specific goals as stated in this Strategic Plan are:
Expansion & Improvement  
Of our existing top-down and bottom-up programming

Development  
Of our capacity for global leadership in the field of environmental peacebuilding and water security

Promotion  
Of a unified organization-wide brand and message

Consolidation  
Of organizational governance, increased transparency and diversification of finances
Programs

EcoPeace Middle East Strategic Plan 2017-2021
Strategic Objectives of Our Top-Down Programing for National, Regional and International Level Policy Making.

EcoPeace’s top-down programs are based on research, on the publication of policy briefs, and on the holding of events that highlight the national self-interest of each side in advancing our policy recommendations. Mutual gain is the focus and goal of our advocacy work vis-a-vis decision makers at the regional and international levels.

“The only source of lasting security is not walls, rockets, U.N. votes or European demonstrations. It’s relationships of trust between neighbors that create healthy interdependencies — ecological and political. They are the hardest things to build, but also the hardest things to break once in place.”

Thomas Friedman, NYT, The Last Train, describing the work of EcoPeace Middle East, October 2014
Water Cannot Wait

The water crises that Gaza faces, water scarcity in the West Bank, and unprecedented levels of pollution highlight to both the Palestinian and the Israeli public that water allocation and management issues can no longer be held hostage to other final status Israeli Palestinian peace process issues.

Objective: Reach a new Israeli Palestinian agreement on water allocation and management issues that fairly and sustainably advances water security for both peoples.

Rationale: Of all final status issues water is the most solvable. Much due to Israeli technological leadership in wastewater reuse and desalination, Israel today can produce more water for domestic use than it has the need for.
This means that the reallocation of natural water can today be negotiated at low political cost to Israel, and at high political gain to both sides. Moving first on water, however, requires a break from the all-or-nothing approach to final status negotiations that has been implemented to date by both the Israeli and Palestinian governments, as well as by the international community. In addition to concrete improvement of water security and livelihood for both Israelis and Palestinians, a new agreement on water would help rebuild the public’s trust and belief in the future success of the peace process.

Targets:
- Show national level decision makers how it is in their best self-interest to move forward on a new Israeli Palestinian water agreement.
- Illustrate to the international community the possibilities for mutual gain in moving forward on a new Israeli Palestinian water agreement.
- Within the 5-year period reach a new Israeli Palestinian agreement on the fair allocation of natural water resources and their sustainable management.
- Seek to double again the amount of water Israel sells to Gaza and to help secure sufficient electric power supply for WWTP and to meet midterm water supply needs in Gaza through desalination.
- Seek implementation of the Israeli MoU commitment to increase water supply to the West Bank by 30 mcm.
- Advocate for improvement of Palestinian water management including pricing, efficiency and governance.
- Seek Israeli Palestinian agreement on cross border wastewater reuse charges.
The Jordan Valley and Dead Sea

Much due to conflict in the Middle East, the Jordan River has seen some 95% of its fresh water diverted, much of its flow polluted, and biodiversity lost. The demise of the Jordan River, together with the actions of the mineral extraction companies in Israel and Jordan, have led to the dramatic destruction of the Dead Sea, into which the Jordan River flows.

Objective: Seek the implementation in part or in full of the Jordan Valley NGO Master Plan and seek to change practices of the mineral extraction industry on the shores of the Dead Sea.

Rationale: Continued misuse of natural resources and lack of regional cooperation in the basin not only threaten the environment, but national and regional security issues as well as they perpetuate underdevelopment and poverty. Advancing the investment strategy detailed in the Master Plan and a healthy Jordan River can serve as the engine for development, increasing the GDP of the basin from $4 million to $73 million annually. The rehabilitation of the Jordan River, combined with changing mineral industry extraction practices, will stabilize the Dead Sea.
Targets:

- Continue to demonstrate to Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian national level decision makers the national security risks associated with current levels of poverty in the basin, and the opportunities presented to create wealth in the Valley thanks to the River’s rejuvenation.
- Create a donor-lead trust fund for the implementation of a limited number of Jordan Valley projects following the signing of a trilateral Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli Jordan Valley Trust Fund MoU.
- Support adoption of new governance structures needed to bring prosperity to the basin.
- Promote the creation of a public private finance mechanism that will attract large scales private sector investment in the valley through innovative financing.
- Research the viability of introducing desalinated water to the Sea of Galilee in order to advance Jordan River rehabilitation efforts and water security for Jordan and Northern Israel (See Water Energy Nexus program described below).
- Promote policies / legislation in Israel and Jordan that would require mineral extraction companies to pay for the Dead Sea water that they extract, creating an economic incentive for investment in new sustainable management technologies for the Dead Sea.
- Continue to lead major public events in partnership with local communities that bring media attention to the unsustainability of the current situation in the Jordan Valley.
- Further research possibilities of expanding the regional integration models developed in the Jordan Valley/Dead Sea to help stabilize the region.
Water Energy Nexus (WEN)

Objective: Create an Israeli/Palestinian/Jordanian Water Energy community that borrows from European experience in creating healthy resource interdependencies that augment national security.

Rationale: Water security at the regional level is partially dependent on increasing water availability through desalination. Creating an Israel-Palestine-Jordan Water Energy Community will enable each partnering country to harness their comparative advantage in needed green energy and water production. It will allow Jordan in particular to produce a surplus of renewable energy that it could in turn sell to Israel and Palestine in exchange for desalinated water from Gaza and from Israel’s Mediterranean coast.

Targets:
- Complete the pre-feasibility study for the WEN.
- Disseminate the results of research to national and international decision-makers and to the broader public to garner political interest.
- Recommend the governance structures needed to attract finances and to ultimately manage the WEN once in place.
- Pilot the implementation of a small-scale WEN project.
Strategic Objectives of our Bottom-Up Programing on Constituency Building through Cross-Border Community Engagement

Our bottom-up approach is about educating local constituencies to call for and lead necessary cross-border solutions to regional water issues. Despite the ongoing conflict, bottom-up programing facilitates the advancement of community interests in cross-border environmental solutions.
Initiated in 2001, the Good Water Neighbors (GWN) program remains EcoPeace’s flagship program for environmental peacebuilding.

**Objective:** Create local constituencies that empower youth, adult residents, mayors and other municipal officials to call for and lead necessary cross-border solutions to regional water issues.

**Rationale:** Mayors and municipal officials are often pawns in the lose-lose reality of poor water and environmental policies. Yet it is their mandate, as well as their commitment towards their constituents, to advance the clear self-interests of their communities when cross-border environmental solutions are proposed despite the prevailing conflict.
Target:

- Advocate the advancement of priority projects that have been identified in the 2016 GWN publication that increase water supply or prevent cross border pollution.
- Advance the watershed-based approach to have greater impact on governance and cross border policy-making.
- Expand the watershed branding initiative to include a pilot branding campaign that will promote an interconnected identity among residents of the pilot watershed and their water resources.
- Review and further develop youth education, including alumni programs for youth trustee graduates, which maximize the impact of the program within each watershed.
- Empower women and girls in each watershed and launch a scholarship program for women’s leadership on water issues.
- Invest in the establishment of new eco-facilities, particularly in schools, in order to model best environmental practices hands-on.
- Revise the Water Resource Guide and develop new education materials, and advance their adoption and implementation by the respective Ministries of Education.
Faith-Based Initiatives

The Jordan River’s symbolic significance in many religions provides a direct opportunity for faith-based engagement in rehabilitation efforts both within local communities across the region and internationally.

Objective: Create local and international faith based constituencies that empower clergy and members to call for and lead Jordan River rehabilitation efforts.

Rationale: Because of the religious importance of the River to the three Abrahamic faiths, faith based communities have a clear self-interest to be outspoken on cross-border environmental solutions that affect the River.

Target:
EcoPeace has developed educational materials for Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities and has issued the 'Jordan River Covenant' that many religious leaders have signed, pledging to advocate for a healthy river. Building on relationships established in the previous five-year strategic planning period, EcoPeace will:

- Continue to bring both local and international faith-based leadership to visit the Jordan River and engage their own communities in the rehabilitation of the River.
- Seek ways to empower religious communities to convert their concern into political will that will in turn impact decision-makers both internationally and locally.
- Aim to gain the support of the Pope through public statements that call for the rehabilitation of the River, and hold together with the Pope a public event on the River's rehabilitation.
Green Economy Initiative (GEI)

EcoPeace has developed an inventory of businesses in some of the Good Water Neighbor watersheds that will advance and strengthen more sustainable development and regional integration through economic activities. For example, tour guides and tour operators have developed cross border tourism packages that focus on the Jordan Valley/Dead Sea and the Jerusalem / Judean Hills. Recently, EcoPeace has also developed a Jordan Valley Resource Guide for Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli tour guides.

**Objective:** Facilitate the creation of economic opportunities for businesses across watersheds in order to promote a healthy integrated environment.

**Rationale:** Empowering local businesses to invest in communities in the development of environment related opportunities help strengthen local level constituency support.
Target:

- Develop new strategic partnerships with the private sector to promote the GEI, including tour operators and tourguide training schools to promote social entrepreneurship.
- Develop new national and regional tour guide training programs and publish additional relevant materials.
- Develop new strategic partnerships with local and international centers of higher education to promote cross border social entrepreneurship in the region.
EcoCenters

Our EcoCenters are places where local, regional and international youth and tourists can come together to learn about and experience the shared environment.

Objective: Support the communities where the EcoCenters are located and their engagement in sustainable development practices.

Rationale: Demonstrate the environmental, educational and economic opportunities of sustainable development.

Target:

- Create a cohesive, unified image and supportive marketing plan for the three EcoCenters.
- Create a cohesive plan that integrates the EcoCenters with the activities of our Center for Water Security, enabling visitors to best experience EcoPeace’s unique methodology hands-on during site visits to the region.
- Further upgrade accommodation facilities at SHE and Auja so that they can attract larger groups while still modeling best sustainable practices.
- Expand partnerships with other local community organizations in order to integrate the EcoCenters into the communities in which they operate.
- Increase outreach undertakings in order to attract students worldwide.
- Expand economic partnerships with the tourism, environmental education and adventure markets.
Adapting EcoPeace’s Methodology Internationally

Climate change and its disruptive impact on water resource management are increasingly recognized as a cause of conflict in more and more areas around the world. Be it in Chad or in Syria, the failure of governance to confront climate-induced poverty has contributed to suffering at an unprecedented scale. The experience gained by EcoPeace can be disseminated in order to help avoid water-related conflict and to promote the sustainable management of shared water resources across the globe.
EcoPeace Center for Water Security

The Center will offer its services to facilitate effective program development in organizations located in shared water basins and will disseminate best practices developed in the Middle East by advising on how to best adopt 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' programming and strategies to the specific circumstances in a given location. Programming will include site visits by members of the target organizations to the Middle East in order to gain on-the-ground familiarity with EcoPeace’s work and the travel of EcoPeace staff to the target regions.

Objective: Create the Center for Water Security in order to share with other water basins the expertise garnered by EcoPeace and to further the organization's capacities through joint learning.

Rationale: Climate-induced water stress, resulting in increased scarcity due to drought and pollution, is the biggest threat facing the planet over the next decade.

Target:
- Create the EcoPeace Center for Water Security in Washington DC.
- Raise funds for the first five years of basic programing to support the long-term sustainability of the Center.
- Develop strategic relationships with development agencies, think tanks and academia that could partner with the Center.
- Pilot the implementation of a model program of joint learning between EcoPeace and three targeted regions over the next three years.
Improving Visibility

Given the current geopolitical instability, today more than ever EcoPeace requires a clear strategy for communication with targeted messaging in order to deliver an accurate depiction of our identity, mission and vision. This will not only promote our brand but will also solidify it. Identifying target audiences to communicate with, developing consistent messaging across all key communication outlets, and ensuring that EcoPeace delivers what is promised are the goals of our overall communication strategy.

As EcoPeace expands beyond the region of Israel, Palestine and Jordan, it is critical to develop a communications strategy that attracts potential clients, donors and organizations that may not have otherwise heard of EcoPeace. Solidifying our accomplishments and policies online as well as in the communities in which we work and have worked will ensure that we are properly represented to an ever-growing audience.

Online

In 2017, EcoPeace will launch a new website that will clearly communicate the organization’s values and will timely deliver information about current activities and projects in order to develop knowledge and to garner support for the organization. The redesigned site will provide outreach to supporters, potential supporters, other stakeholders, the public and the media, and will support fundraising opportunities. Each project page will have a clear purpose and call-to-action. All material on our website will be supported by the extensive dissemination of information through our multiple social media platforms so as to render the organization a household name.
In Local Communities

EcoPeace’s unique approach, one that empowers communities to take charge in the implementation phase of projects, may leave the organization's name out of ceremonial activities at the project's completion. EcoPeace may thus lose recognition of some of its engagements and contributions. At times, this may cause some to question the extent of EcoPeace's role and the benefits it brings to its communities; it can also serve as an opportunity for critics to delegitimize our activities. EcoPeace needs to ensure better recognition of its involvement so that it can advertise success stories and capitalize on opportunities to document its full impact on the local communities. To achieve this, EcoPeace will empower local staff to better communicate the role that the organization has played in their communities, and to amplify how the organization will continue to serve as a resource for the communities even after projects are completed.

Communicating a Unified Image

As a regional organization in the midst of regional conflict, disseminating a strong, organization-wide identity and message is no easy task. It is extremely important to continuously invest in and proactively develop regional messaging and standard terminology with the highest degree of alignment in both official and unofficial communication by all staff and volunteers. Ensuring the commitment of all staff to the organization’s core values will aid in combatting opportunistic political adversaries creating doubts about EcoPeace's mission and actions. Situations quickly arise with an immediate need for appropriate reaction and response, and it is important that staff and volunteers at all levels receive training to deliver consistent messaging.
Internal Operations

In a political climate that is violent, chaotic and disjointed, EcoPeace must operate in a unified, streamlined manner that allows it to efficiently produce results and adapt quickly to changing situations. Strong, effective governance across the organization and improved transparency and diversification of financing are steps that can be taken in order to ensure maximum effectiveness of internal operations.

Governance

Since 2014, EcoPeace’s Board of Directors has expanded from six to nine individuals and has taken on a larger role in the governance of the organization. EcoPeace will continue to further define the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of leadership, while members of the Board will continue to take on a more prominent part in decision-making.
In the previous strategic planning period, EcoPeace established an International Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC has proven to be an important vehicle that contributes to EcoPeace’s growth by advising the Directors and introducing the organization to strategic partners. In this current strategic planning period new subgroups of the IAC will be created in North America and Europe.

**Finance**

In 2016, the EcoPeace Board of Directors approved the creation of a new position for international development. This position will be based in the United States and will focus on high net worth individuals and new private foundations in order to broaden our donor base. The Board was concerned about the over-reliance on donor agencies in the budget of EcoPeace. The executive development director, with the support of our local development team, will develop a strategic financing plan that will include the exploration of new and emerging methods of fundraising such as bequests, crowd funding and peer-to-peer online giving. Diversifying our funding sources in this way will help grow the organization to be more financially sustainable.

**System Integration**

In 2015, EcoPeace began using the Internet-based software NetSuite in order to increase transparency and ease of information access across the organization. As implementation advances, this system will contain all budgeting, CRM and project management information and will allow monthly reporting for individual projects and entities across the entire EcoPeace organization. This will enable the organization to deliver more timely and accurate information to all those responsible for the management of projects, as well as the opportunity to increase the financial responsibility of project managers and to ensure increased transparency and control for the project managers.