

**ECOLEX – a global partnership for information on environmental law
Submission for Type 2 Partnerships And Initiatives**

PARAMETERS	The objective is to increase access to authoritative information on environmental law by establishing a single gateway on the Internet (ECOLEX) and publishing a range of products on specific topics. The delivery of treaties, national legislation, legal literature and court decisions will be a priority activity between 2002 and 2008.
Basis	There is high demand for information on environmental law. Various Governing Council decisions of UNEP recognise the need to make this information available and accessible, a task now included in the Montevideo Programme, adopted by UNEP/GC in 2001 and endorsed thereafter by UN/GA. Linguistic barriers must be overcome. The information is fragmented and changing constantly as new laws are being drafted and entering into force.
Scope and reach	UNEP, FAO and IUCN are integrating their legal information holdings and plan to consolidate, refine and expand the resulting databank. Given the magnitude of the task, and complexity of developing a multilingual global information system on environmental law, a modular approach will be taken towards the up-welling of information from the national level to the system. The sustainability of the ECOLEX gateway is dependent on building capacity among regional partners to identify, classify, manage and provide access to the legal information available at the national level. Networking is a key component in underpinning the development of the sub-regional ECOLEX modules. Partnerships have to be developed between the lead regional node for ECOLEX and the custodians of environmental law in the respective countries of the region.
Beneficiaries	The main beneficiaries will be policy-makers in developing countries and countries in transition. Policy-makers drafting new legislation have a need to obtain information on the law existing in relevant thematic areas in other countries. NGOs, academics and advocacy groups are also important beneficiaries. Business and industry also need information on environmental law in particular on legal mechanisms dealing with waste, pollution and EIA, etc
Resources	UNEP, FAO and IUCN will continue to provide seed funding from their respective core programmes. However, the support of donor agencies for developing and maintaining the global hub and for national-level capacity building initiatives is critical to the success of the project.
Coordination	A steering committee composed of UNEP, FAO and IUCN directs and monitors ECOLEX activities. Reports on the status of implementation of the initiative is provided on an annual basis to donors and other interested parties.
Institutional framework	UNEP, FAO and IUCN have signed a partnership agreement to initiate the project. Other key organizations including regional ones, such as EEA, APCEL and REC will be invited to join the initiative.
Monitoring	The Steering Committee of ECOLEX monitors the implementation of ECOLEX activities within an annual workplan, including the activities of regional and national nodes.

Stakeholders and partners	UNEP, FAO and IUCN are the principal ECOLEX partners. Regional and national groups and institutions, such as law libraries, NGOs and commercial publishers will become associated as ECOLEX develops.
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