



Activity report - 2016

Planning

The following are activities that took place during 2016:

- **Open Land Internet Portal:** OLI launched a new initiative to establish a **National Open Land Internet Portal** that will collect and provide all the data regarding open land and its conservation in order to make the data available to all potential users including planners, decision makers and the general public.

Status:

- ✓ Wide participation was achieved both with governmental and non-governmental organizations
 - ✓ A detailed proposal was prepared and sent for funding to the Open Space Protection Fund. The proposal was approved therefore securing a two year budget for the project.
 - ✓ A pilot project is on the way. A productive experimental phase proved fruitful and will be implemented in developing the actual portal.
- **Biosphere Reserves** – OLI has been an active participant in the Planning Administration's working committee which is examining the potential for establishing biosphere reserves in Israel. Progress was made regarding the incorporation of OLI's principal recommendations. This will be continued in the future.

Open Space Preservation in the Agricultural and Rural Sectors

Cooperation with the Israeli Rural Regional Councils Center (IRRCC).

The cooperation with the IRRCC and its growing commitment to open land preservation has led to the completion of a comprehensive guide for planning and management of open spaces in rural regional councils. The Chairman of IRRCC was nominated as co-chairman of OLI.

Applied Studies

OLI conducts professional applied studies resulting in policy recommendations for environmentally friendly planning and land management tools. The following studies were conducted during the grant period:

- ✓ **Farmers' Perceptions of Conservation Tillage Practices in Israel: Constraints to Adoption and Tools to Solve Them**

This research focuses on the farmers, as they are the chief decision makers in soil conservation and therefore the key to succeed in these efforts. The research included more than 30 interviews and gave recommendations about ways to expand the range of farmers that adopt and follow conservation tillage practices. The research was conducted by a multidisciplinary group, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture.



✓ **Biodiversity Hot-Spots**

The study locates, characterizes and classifies hot-spots - vitally important and threatened sites essential for biodiversity and ecosystem protection.

Status:

- 400 sites were located and mapped.
- Additional sites location, data gathering, classification of the sites in accordance to their values & threats. **In progress.**
- Budget of 450,000 NIS has been allocated to the project by the Open Space Protection Fund and the Nature and Parks authority.

✓ **Biodiversity conservation on Israeli farms**

The study identifies the best practices for farm biodiversity conservation, based on studies conducted in Israel and Mediterranean areas, using the methodology that was developed in the "conservation evidence" project (University of Cambridge, UK). The research is funded by the Ministry of Environment.

✓ **Recreation and biodiversity**

The study focuses on areas rich in biodiversity, as attraction for recreation. It evaluates costs and benefits of biodiversity-restoration near Tel Aviv that also attracts many tourists. It is funded by Israel's State Lottery and guided by the Israeli Rural Regional Councils Center.

✓ **Pesticides management near residential areas**

Substantial portion of farms in Israel are located near villages and towns. The study aims at developing guidelines that will minimize the exposure of residential areas to agricultural chemicals. It is funded by Nekudat Chen (private research fund) and guided by the Israeli Rural Regional Councils Center.

✓ **Agro-ecology scientific working group**

Together with the Israel society of ecology and environmental sciences, OLI established a working team of scientists, policy makers and farmers, that will work together to promote agro-ecological research and policy.

Agriculture & Rural Development Policy – Review of current policies and pinpointing the further development and improvement of Agro-Ecological aspects.

OLI's Open Space Survey and Evaluation Unit

The following surveys have been conducted during the reporting period:

Completed Surveys

- Dishon Basin
- Northern Negev
- Northern Judean Mountains
- Lachish military zone
- Nachshon Forest
- Invasive trees in the coastal nature reserves and national parks



New surveys - in progress

- Kishon Basin steams survey
- "Red" plant species survey and database development
- South West Jerusalem Mountains
- South Arava and Uvda valley
- Netofa Valley stage 2
- Classification of the Negev's ecological units
- Monitoring of the southern Dead Sea area

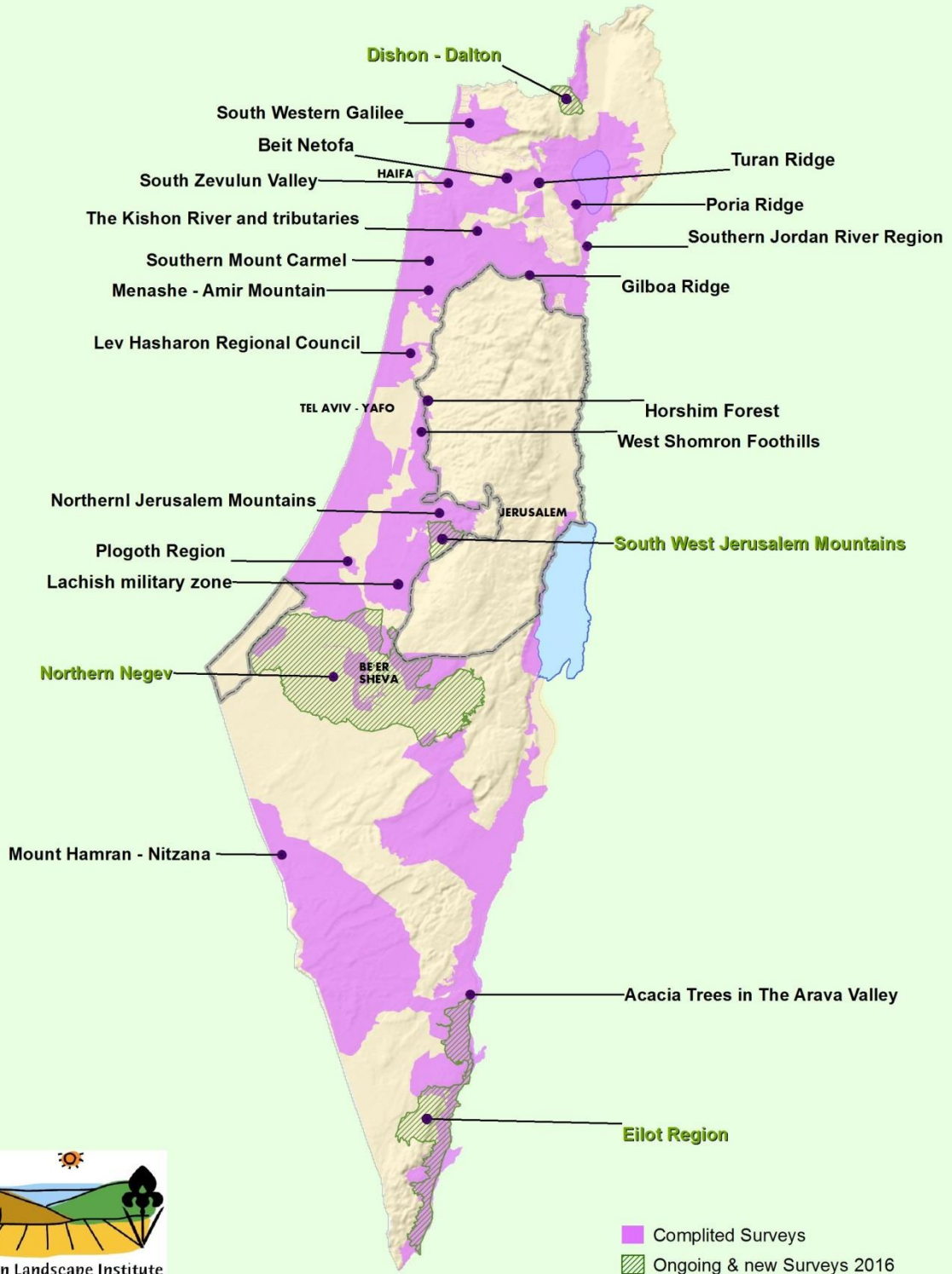
OLI's GIS Unit

- Ongoing provision of spatial services and analysis to OLI's activity.
- Operation and development of OLI's internet site



OLI-Open Landscape Institute

OLI's Nature and Landscape Surveys



OLI-Open Landscape Institute