



Rules of Procedure of the ECO

As adopted by the Eminent Persons Group on 18-01-1996 and revised by the Senior Officials of the ECO Member states at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 7-9 May, 1996 and amended by the 8th COM meeting held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on May 9, 1998

Note:

New chapter xii was endorsed by the 146th meeting of CPR on 4th March 2009 and approved by the 18th COM on 9th March 2009 in Tehran.

THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF
ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)

PREAMBLE

1. These rules shall be called Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Economic Cooperation Organization. These rules shall come into force with effect from the date of their approval by the ECO Council of Ministers and shall apply to all activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization and the meetings of the Council of Ministers (COM), Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR), the Regional Planning Council (RPC), Secretariat and/or ad-hoc committees established for specific functions.

CHAPTER I

MANDATES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ORGANS

A) COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (COM)

2. Council of Ministers shall be the highest policy and decision making body of ECO. It shall meet at least once a year preferably prior to the beginning of ECO fiscal year by rotation, in the territories of the Member States. The Council of Ministers may propose the convening of meetings of other Ministers for the formulation and recommendation of Plans and projects in their respective fields. The Council of Ministers shall have, inter-alia, the following responsibilities:

- a) Approve policies, strategies, and work programmes of ECO;
- b) Appoint the Secretary General and his Deputies;
- c) Review and adopt the reports of the Regional Planning Council, Council of Permanent Representatives and Specialized Agencies;
- d) Review the reports of the Regional Institutions;
- e) Establish such subsidiary or ad-hoc Committees as appropriate;
- f) Approve annual budget and audit reports of the Organization;
- g) Decide on the scale of assessment of contribution by Member States to the budget of the Organization;
- h) Prepare the draft agenda and other arrangements for the Summit Meetings;
- i) Report to the Summit on all matters related to the implementation of ECO programmes and projects;

- j) Determine and review as and when necessary, rules and regulations regarding all fiscal, administrative and organizational matters and provisions of financial and staff regulations of the Secretariat.

B) COUNCIL OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR)

3. The Council of Permanent Representatives shall meet as often as necessary under the chairpersonship of the representative of Member State holding the chairpersonship of the Council of Ministers and carry out the following functions:

- a) It shall be responsible on behalf of and in the name of the Council of Ministers to implement its decisions and carry out its policies;
- b) Report to the Council of Ministers on all policy related issues and matters referred to it by the Council.
- c) Consider the budget and audit reports of the Organization and recommend them to the COM for approval.
- d) Advise/recommend to the Regional Planning Council on the economic functions of the Secretariat and other technical matters referred to it by the RPC.
- e) Review all the reports of the Secretariat.
- f) Prepare the draft agenda and expedite other arrangement for the RPC and COM meetings.
- g) Monitor follow up action on the decisions of the RPC.

C) REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL (RPC)

4. The Regional Planning Council shall meet at least once a year prior to the annual meeting of the Council of Ministers under the chairpersonship of the representative of the Member state holding the chairpersonship of the Council of Ministers. It shall evolve basic strategies/policies and plans in accordance with the objectives and principles of regional cooperation laid down in the Treaty of Izmir, as well as policy guidelines and directives of the Council of Ministers. To accomplish this task, the RPC shall:

- a) Institutionalize itself at the national levels for regular coordination among designated focal points in each area of activity.

- b) Biennially review ECO's priorities laid down in the Economic Cooperation Strategy.
- c) Annually review the progress of implementation of ECO's approved programmes of action and projects.
- d) Critically review and evaluate the economic work of the Secretariat and formulate recommendations to the COM.
- e) Prepare ECO's Annual Calendar of Events for submission to the Council of Ministers.
- f) Propose when necessary, the establishment of ad-hoc technical committees to the Council of Ministers.
- g) Prepare Annual Economic Report of the ECO region.
- h) Submit its annual report to the Council of Ministers through the Secretary General.

D) ECO SECRETARIAT

5. In pursuance of Article-IX of the Treaty of Izmir, the Secretariat shall initiate, coordinate and monitor the implementation of ECO activities and service all meetings of the Organization in line with the agreed documents and directives of the governing organs of ECO. Accordingly the Secretariat shall undertake the following duties;

Overall Responsibilities and Functions of the Secretariat:

- (i) To prepare plans, programmes and projects envisaged by ECO's decision-making organs;
- (ii) To serve as the permanent channel of communications and coordination among Member Governments in all areas related to ECO's agreed programmes and activities through all means available to it; in this context also to provide practical information to the Member States on procedural matters and all other fields as may be needed.
- (iii) To serve as the custodian of all documentation and archives of ECO;
- (iv) To assist all permanent and ad-hoc organs of ECO in the performance of their work;
- (v) To service technically and administratively all meetings and activities of the Organization and help the preparation of reports and documents.

- (vi) To act as the information agency for ECO in all related areas within as well as outside the region;
- (vii) To communicate, cooperate and interact with relevant regional and international organizations and agencies in agreed areas in accordance with the policy documents and directives of ECO's decision making organs;
- (viii) To engage in activities and contacts in support of the member governments in order to facilitate financing of agreed projects and activities through international financial organizations, investors and donors;
- (ix) To monitor the activities and maintain contact with regional institutions and specialized agencies and serve as a bridge between them and the Council of Ministers;
- (x) To prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Council of Ministers on the overall performance and activities of the Organization;
- (xi) To carry out such other functions and duties as may be assigned to it by the Council of Ministers and the Council of Permanent Representatives;
- (xii) To establish and operate a documentation and publication system in line with international standards;
- (xiii) To maintain effective communications with the Permanent Missions/Embassies and national focal points of the Member States through a modern and speedy network.

Operational Structure and Economic Functions of Secretariat

6. The Secretariat shall carry out its technical work through following Directorates:

- (a) Trade,
- (b) Transport & Telecommunications,
- (c) Energy, Minerals and Environment,
- (d) Industry & Agriculture,
- (e) Economic Research & Statistics,
- (f) Project Research.

7. The Directorates of the Secretariat shall work round the year holding periodical meetings with the participation of designated representatives of the Permanent Missions/Embassies accredited to ECO and/or with participation of national experts coming from respective capitals.

8. Economic Directorates shall have the following general terms of reference:

- (i) Determine the scope and potential of regional cooperation in the agreed areas;
- (ii) Exchange information and experiences on related subjects.
- (iii) Formulate programmes and projects;
- (iv) Prepare Terms of Reference for the pre-feasibility/feasibility studies on agreed projects;
- (v) Determine financial implications of the projects and recommend modalities for their financing;
- (vi) Monitor progress of implementation of the approved projects and coordinate actions through the Member States.
- (vii) Submit reports/recommendations to the Regional Planning Council in consultation with the CPR.

9. Ad-hoc Committees may be formed only for specific functions with a specific mandate and for limited time.

10. Regional and international consultants may be hired, subject to approval by the CPR or COM, upon recommendation of the Secretariat and/or RPC to undertake assignments such as preparation of specific reports, researches, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, as well as for monitoring, supervising and evaluating the implementation of projects and programmes.

CHAPTER II

MEETINGS

11. All meetings of the Economic Cooperation Organization, with the exception of the Council of Permanent Representatives shall be held according to the annual calendar of events approved by the Council of Ministers.

12. For the meetings organized at the ECO Secretariat, each participating delegation shall bear his/her own expenses. For the meetings held in the Member States, local hospitality and internal travel for the duration of the meeting shall be provided by the host country, while the international travel to and from the venue of the meeting shall be borne by the participating Member State.

13. For the events to be held in the ECO Member States, the dates may, in exceptional cases, and at the request of the host country, be changed from those approved in the calendar of events. The concurrence of other Member States shall be secured by the ECO Secretariat.

14. Any meeting, except those of the Council of Permanent Representatives can be convened in extraordinary sessions upon the request of a Member State subject to the agreement of the Council of Permanent Representatives.

15. In principle, in each meeting, the Council of Permanent Representatives shall fix the date of its next meeting. Any member or the Secretary General may also request for a meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives at a shorter notice. Such a request shall be conveyed to the Secretary General who shall circulate it at least one week before the date of the meeting.

CHAPTER III

AGENDA

16. The draft agenda of the Summit meetings and the meetings of Council of Ministers shall be drawn up by the Council of Permanent Representatives not later than six weeks before the date of the meeting and they shall be immediately circulated to Member States by the Secretary General.

17. The draft agenda with annotations for the meetings of the Council of Permanent Representatives shall be prepared by the Secretary General keeping in view the proposals of the Council of Permanent Representatives. The draft agenda with annotations shall be circulated two weeks in advance.

18. Any member may propose new items for inclusion in the agenda for a meeting of the Council of Ministers or Council of Permanent Representatives which shall be sent to the Secretariat for circulation at least two weeks before the deadline for finalization of the draft agenda for that meeting. However, for such an item to be adopted in the final agenda, the presence of the Member States proposing it shall be necessary.

19. The Secretary General, after receiving views of Member States, shall prepare and circulate the provisional agenda for meetings of the Regional Planning Council. The Secretariat shall propose the provisional draft agenda eight weeks in advance of the meetings through the CPR. Within three weeks the Member States shall convey their comments/ amendments to the proposed agenda. A final draft agenda shall be circulated four weeks in advance of the meeting. The Secretariat shall also provide agenda annotations and/or working papers if possible four weeks advance. Any Member State may propose the inclusion of any new agenda item before the adoption of the final agenda in the meeting.

CHAPTER IV

REPRESENTATION & CREDENTIALS

20. Each Member State shall be represented in ECO by an accredited Permanent Representative. The credentials of the Permanent Representative appointed to ECO shall be signed by the Foreign Minister of the country concerned and presented to the Secretary General of ECO.

21. Each Member State shall be represented in ECO meetings by an accredited representative. The representative may be accompanied to the meetings of ECO by alternate representatives and advisors. The credentials of each representative appointed to ECO together with a designation of the alternate representative shall be communicated to the Secretary General of ECO.

CHAPTER V

CHAIRPERSONSHIP

22. At the beginning of every ECO calendar year, policy making organs (COM, RPC, CPR) shall form the Bureau of Chairperson by nominating the Chairperson and electing, a Vice-Chairperson and a rapporteur from among the heads of delegations of participating Member States in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 below. The Secretary General or his/her representative shall assist the Bureau. If the Chairperson is to be absent from a meeting, the Vice Chairperson shall preside over the meeting.

23. The chairpersonship of the ECO Council of Ministers shall rest with the Minister of the Member State hosting the annual meeting of the Council who shall remain chairperson until the election of his/her successor in the next annual meeting of the Council.

24. For the meeting of the RPC and CPR the chairpersonship should remain with the representative of the Member States holding the chairpersonship of the COM.

25. For all other ECO meetings other than the policy making organs, the representative of the host Member State shall be elected chairperson. In case the chairpersonship is not available, the member next in alphabetic order shall chair the meeting.

26. In the meetings to be held at the Secretariat, the representative of the country holding the chairpersonship of COM shall preside over.

CHAPTER VI

REPRESENTATION OF THE SECRETARIAT IN THE MEETINGS

27. The Secretary General, or in his/her absence, his/her designated representative shall attend all meetings of the Organization, and may make oral or written statements, as well as offer clarifications upon request.
28. The Secretary General shall represent the Organization in external relations. He may also designate member(s) of the staff to represent the Organization in international meetings.

CHAPTER VII

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Quorum:

29. The approved Calendar of Events and participation in meetings shall be considered as mandatory, for all members. However, in case of unavoidable circumstances, the necessary quorum shall be as under:-
- (a) The quorum for all meetings of the Council of Ministers, shall be four-fifth of the total membership.
 - (b) For the Meetings of Council of Permanent Representatives and the Regional Planning Council the quorum shall be two-third of the total membership.
 - (c) For all other meetings, the quorum shall be simple majority of the total membership. However, for events not requiring taking any decision, the quorum shall be four Member States only.¹
 - (d) In case a Member State cannot attend a meeting, it shall inform the Secretariat at least four weeks before the date of the meeting.

Calendar of Events:

30. The Calendar of Events, which shall cover all ECO activities, except those of CPR shall be prepared by the Secretary General, endorsed by the Regional Planning Council, recommended by the Council of Permanent Representatives and approved by the Council of Ministers.

¹ As Amended by the 8th COM meeting held in Almaty, May 9, 1998.

31. For meetings to be held in the member states, in case confirmation of participation by member states required for obtaining necessary quorum for a meeting is not received by the Secretariat at least two weeks before the approved date of that meeting, such a meeting shall be postponed. Fresh dates shall be proposed by the host government/Secretariat, and concurrence to these dates by other Member States shall be obtained by the Secretariat.

Venue:

32. All meetings of the Organization shall be held at the ECO Secretariat except the meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers and those meetings including RPC which any Member State volunteers to host. If a Member State is unable to host a previously committed meeting, it shall inform the Secretariat at least two months before the approved date. In such a situation the meeting shall be held in the Secretariat.

Drafting Committees/Working Groups:

33. Any meeting may assign open-ended drafting committee(s) or working group(s) for preparation of the reports of the meetings with the assistance of the Secretariat.

34. The Council of Ministers, Council of Permanent Representatives, and Regional Planning Council may establish ad-hoc technical committees to discuss matters referred to them whenever needed.

CHAPTER VIII

DECISION-MAKING

35. Each Member State present and voting shall have one vote.

36. With the exception of decisions on vital issues referred to in para-1 of Article-XII of the Treaty of Izmir requiring unanimity of all members, decisions in meetings of the Council of Ministers, the Council of Permanent Representatives and the Regional Planning Council shall be taken on the principle of simple majority of the total membership of ECO provided that remaining members choose to abstain and/or are not against the decision.

37. In all other meetings, recommendations shall be adopted by simple majority of the total membership of the Organization with every member having the right to record his reservations, if any.

38. The reports of all meetings of the Organization shall be adopted at the closure of the meetings.

39. The Member States who have been unable to participate in a meeting may express their views in writing within four weeks to the Secretariat which shall be circulated to other Member States.

40. A representative may at any time raise a point of order in the meetings, which shall immediately be decided by the Chairperson in accordance with the present rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the chairperson. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote, and the chairperson's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present in the meeting and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the question under discussion.

41. The decision taken by the Council of Ministers shall be binding on all Member States.

CHAPTER IX

LANGUAGES

42. English shall be the official language for all meetings. Arrangements for adequate unofficial Russian translation and interpretation services shall be provided by the Government hosting the meeting or the Secretariat in cases where it is the venue of the meetings.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY RECORDS AND REPORTS OF THE MEETINGS

43. Reports and summary records of all ECO meetings shall comprise essentially the points agreed, views expressed and operative decisions taken by the Member States. They should be prepared in a way to secure progressive implementation of projects and achievement of ECO's agreed objectives.

44. For the Summit meetings, the Secretariat shall prepare summary records and distribute them among the Member States as soon as possible. The views of the Summit Meeting shall be pursued by all concerned organs of ECO in the implementation of their plans and programmes.

45. For other meetings, a final report shall be prepared and adopted at the end of the meeting.

46. The reports of the COM and CPR shall take immediate effect, whereas all other reports shall be of recommendatory nature until they are adopted by the Council of Ministers.

CHAPTER XI

STATUS AND PARTICIPATION OF INVITEES

47. Subject to the approval of the Council of Permanent Representatives:
- (i). Representatives of the UN agencies or those organizations/ agencies outside the UN System with which ECO enjoys institutionalized cooperative relationship or representatives of agreed non Member States may be invited to inaugural and closing ceremonies of high level ECO meetings.
 - (ii). They may also be invited to be present during discussions on proposals or projects involving collaboration with their organizations/countries.

CHAPTER XII

MODALITIES

48. The activities of the ECO main organs, ad hoc arrangements, regional centres, ECO Funds, as well as any other specific activity of the Organization shall be conducted in accordance with the modalities drawn up by the CPR and approved by the COM.

49. The Secretariat shall compile a compendium of all the approved modalities which shall be circulated to the Member States. This compendium shall be considered as an integral part of the ECO Rules of Procedure.

CHAPTER XIII

AMENDMENTS

50. Any amendment to these rules shall be made by the Council of Ministers on a proposal by the Council of Permanent Representatives.