

Project Title	Tour operators network in ECO region
Project Objectives	Main goal is establishing a network among major tour operators in ECO region for providing ECO Tourism Package that would be so useful for increasing number of tourists and tourism revenues.
Project Budget (US\$)	To be determined
Project Funding Source	ECO Secretariat, UNWTO or any other Regional or International Organizations may be explored for full or partial financing of the project.
Project Coordinator	ECO Secretariat
International/Regional Partner	UNWTO or any other Regional or International Organizations
Duration of Project	18 months
Project Starting Time	2019
Project Progress	-

Background:

The Strategic Objective which was defined for Tourism sector in ECO Vision 2025 is establishing a peaceful and green tourism destination with diverse products and high quality Services in the region. One of the Expected Outcomes of Tourism sector in ECO Vision 2025 is strengthening Private sector and local community involvement in the tourism activities. Also, we have ECO-NGO and Tourism Agencies Meeting in ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2018 which shows the importance role of this area in Tourism industry growth. It seems that making a network among major tour operators in ECO region to provide ECO Tourism Package would be so useful.

The primary purpose of the project is promoting integrity within the tour operator industry in ECO region. Tour operators network is going to provide professional services by setting up an appropriate platforms of dialogue, cooperation, data exchanges and experience sharing to use all capacities and opportunities in ECO region as a rich area in cultural heritage and historical.

Achieving a high level of professionalism within the tour operator industry requires a set of professional standards which include representing all facts, conditions and requirements relating to tours truthfully and accurately.

Tour operators' network could include 10 major tour operators from ECO Member States which will introduce at least 3 main Tourist Roads such as Tabriz-Baku-Istanbul.

Following the better Tourism and better life, tour operators' network in ECO region is committed to promoting tourism for peace, sustainable development and poverty reduction

based on mutual trust and respect, mutual benefit and win-win outcomes.

It's worth noting that the duration of project will be effected/started after the allocation of project's budget.

Necessary Actions and Assistance Needed

- a) Impalement the part of ECO Vision 2025 in Tourism sector regarding to strengthening Private sector and local community involvement in the tourism activities.
- b) Member States shall submit their Focal Points in related industry
- c) Networking of the 10 most important Tour operators from 10 MS
- d) Sharing data and knowledge among the Member States regarding Tour operators
- e) Introducing at least 3 main Tourist Roads.
- f) Terms of References of establishing a Tour operators network in ECO region will be prepared
- g) ECO Experts Meetings and appropriate workshops will be Organized
- h) The concerned Member States are requested to be actively involved

Expected Outcomes of the Project

- 1) Achieving a high level of professionalism within the tour operator industry
- 2) Developing sustainable tourism industry in the ECO region
- 3) Providing ECO Tourism Package
- 4) Optimal use of existing resources and capacities in order to have less costly and high quality trips in the ECO region.
- 5) Increasing number of tourists and the amount of tourism revenues.
- 6) Promoting ECO Region as one of the best tourism destinations.

Project Title	Pre-feasibility study of planning a mechanism for issuing ECO Tourist Visa for Non ECO Nationals.
Project Objectives	Major objective of the project is Tourist Visa Facilitation for non ECO nationals for travelling to ECO Countries.
Project Budget (US\$)	-
Project Funding Source	ECO Secretariat, UNWTO or any other Regional or International Organizations.
Project Coordinator	ECO Secretariat
International/Regional Partner	UNWTO or any other donors
Duration of Project	12-18 months
Project Starting Time	2019
Project Progress	-

Background:

The increase in tourism receipts resulting from visa facilitation is the product of the increased international tourist arrivals and the average spending per tourist. Job creation in the travel and tourism sector is fuelled by tourism spending. The spending of the additional tourists resulting from visa facilitation in ECO destinations directly supports jobs in tourism industries, including hotels, restaurants, retail stores, transportation, entertainment and recreation. The employment impacts are not limited to tourism industries. Indirect jobs are created through the supply chain of tourism industries and induced jobs are generated as employees spend their incomes in other sectors of the economy.

Visa and travel procedure facilitation for the citizens of the ECO and Non ECO regions has been always one of the important goals in Tourism Sector. In this regard and with respect to the purposes of the ECO Vision 2025, effective cooperations of all Member States are needed to promote tourism industry regionally.

At the first phase we are going to facilitate the process of travelling to ECO countries for the Non ECO citizens with the aim of tangible increase in tourism receipts and related revenues in ECO region. That's mean for the third country citizens getting a tourist visa from a member states may be valid for travelling in other ECO countries, which may facilitate to ECO tour package. In the other words a unified Tourist visa regime should be developed within the ECO region to extend tourist visa sticker with a specific label to the foreigners visiting ECO region. The mechanism should facilitate the process of obtaining tourist visa from any country of the ECO region and it should be valid for whole region for a specific period.

There can be several different mechanisms to achieve this goal which will be investigated in this project through the appropriate Pre-feasibility study. For example one mechanism can be defining some Rules & Regulations/Terms & Conditions arranged by Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any other relevant organizations of the Member States. If someone passes all the Terms, he will be qualified to get an ECO Tourist Visa for a specific period of time and accordingly can travel easily to all the ECO Countries. In another mechanism any Member State which has received the request of ECO Tourist Visa from Non ECO Nationals, must send the request to all other Member States for their views. The Member States have a specific period for internal investigation and furnish the concerned Member State with the results. If no objection is announced during the defined period, the ECO Tourist Visa will be issued for the Applicant by the concerned Member State.

If this Project proved successful, the same arrangements can be offered for businessmen, drivers within the ECO region.

It's worth noting that Duration of Project will be started after the allocation of Project Budget.

Necessary Actions and Assistance Needed

- a) Implement the part of ECO Vision 2025 in Tourism sector regarding to Visa facilitation.
- b) Hiring an international consultant for preparation of the Pre-feasibility study for planning a mechanism for issuing ECO Tourist Visa
- c) Exploring Financial and technical support of UNWTO or any other Regional or International Organizations by ECO Secretariat.
- d) Holding ECO Experts Meetings on the issue.
- e) The concerned Member States are requested to be actively involved.

Expected Outcomes of the Project

- 1) stimulating economic growth and job creation
- 2) The increase in tourism receipts and related revenues
- 3) Getting to know more about ECO region history, culture and art