

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## A. Suggested Topics for Papers:

### I. REGIONAL CLEAN ENERGY

#### Research topic:

- **How fast do renewables become cheaper enabling the use of this global opportunity for green growth?**

#### Summary

- The ECO region has long been associated with an image of affluent home for energy riches. As with today world's rapid departure from costly and hazardous fossil fuels to a cleaner energy, the region should become an epicenter of emerging opportunities in energy. Across G20 countries, 60% of world population is aware that a rapid transition to renewable energies should be undertaken in this decade. In this context, technologies are becoming increasingly available and affordable. Growing is the pressure from civil society and the financial sector at the global level, especially in the aftermath of recent decisions climate change decisions adopted by the United Nations. The game changer nodes in the ongoing massive transformation are to be the "learning curves" that enable each cumulatively installed clean energy capacity to generate a double decline in energy prices. The latter softening will be for the benefit of the public at large. The ECO stakeholders favor the development of clean energy in the region. As a practical step forward along this path, they have recently adopted the ECO Energy Cooperation Strategy and the Plan of Action, in this regard.
- How can the downslide in energy prices be achieved? This suggested research topic can further be explored at the ECO regional level with the view of broader investments for scaling up the renewable technologies. In the meantime, the fossil fuels account to 79% of world's energy production and are not off the energy market at all, even in the face of the recordings of their 87% share of contribution to the global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The reason is that the production of fossil fuels remains cheaper compared to any of its alternatives. To that end, should the ECO region wish to be sourced by cleaner energy? What would need to be done to ensure that such alternatives will be cheaper, safer and more efficient?

### II. SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL FINANCING

#### Research topic:

- **Diversity drives the expansion of world’s regional payment systems. Is broader participation a major benefit that public- at- large can gain from world’s regional multifaceted financial systems?**

#### Summary

- The ECO research reveals that the regional payment systems can be effective based on the results of the study completed in April of the current year. If to follow global examples and best tested practices of regional payment systems, the latter have been the success stories of the effectiveness in world’s regional organizations like ASEAN, and others. In the context of the ECO, how the various private financing entities can interact vis-à-vis one another? Under the similar token, how may those self-organize and roll out their designed capacities from within the regional payment system itself so that the benefits from operation of such a system could be used by all?

### III. AUTOPILOT SYSTEMS AND THE AI IN REGIONAL TRANSPORT

#### Research topic:

- **Realistic outlook for the ECO regional transport network future: which of the high-tech innovative transport solutions do exist in the region and which are yet to come?**

#### Summary

The ECO regional transport network is presently moderately traditional in the technological sense. The topic that encourages this research is: the future use of autopilot (self-driving) systems and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the ECO regional transport. It is commonly known that new technologies do not recognize borders. Thus, innovations will eventually be the reality if not of today then tomorrow. To that impact, the present Call for Papers encourages not only a topic-specific research but also descriptions about the current status of the preparedness in the ECO countries toward the newly technological transport, including autopilot systems and the AI. In that context, the ECO may be interested in bracing for what would be the ‘employment substitutions for transport workers’, in case the autopilot systems and the AI will have led to the redundancy of human labor force in road and rail-based transport. Well-analyzed research works on this topic will be most welcome.

Involvement of Information Communications Technology (ICT) is prolific in transport. In this regard, the ECO’s main strategy “**ECO Vision 2025**” envisages that: “The ICT connectivity will have inevitable impact on future development of the ECO Region through development of information and communication technology and integration in the global market, where information and communications technology is a contributor to

sustainable and inclusive growth” (p.8, Section II: Policy Environment, ECO Vision 2025; available under ‘resources and documents’ at: [www.eco.int](http://www.eco.int)).

At policy support side, the "*ECO Regional ICT Strategy for Information Society Development*" was adopted by ICT Ministers of the Member States during the Second ECO Ministerial Meeting on ICT (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017) whereupon the “Baku Declaration on ICT” has been adopted for implementation.

At implementation side, views/thoughts/ideas relating to the above-set research topic will be appreciated.

## IV. ECO REGIONAL AGRICULTURE

### Research topic:

### **Does the ECO regional food security currently face a challenge of transformation?**

#### Summary

- At the global level, some researchers presently observe that only 41% of people admit the need for a breakthrough revolution in food industry. Food industry is human life support mechanism. That said the current food supply system results in the alarmingly huge levels of food waste. Added to this is the single-handed management of the seed development. The latter situation leads to a greater monopolization of seeds by multinational corporations (MNCs). A serious threat comes from soil degradation coupled with the contamination of water ways by chemical residues. Above all, the decreasing levels of biodiversity threaten the food safety let alone its secure production. Under these circumstances, is the urge for transformation imminent for ECO’s regional food systems, and if yes, what are the measures recommended to resolve such urge? Practice-proved research evidences of undertaking the above-referred measures (and others as may be relevant) are needed.
- The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit is one other ‘cape diem’ opportunity for the food-system reform. Variety of the regenerative farming models have emerged from UN-anchored brainstorming platform, globally. The prevailing reliance on farming and grazing practices that protect from land degradation may become dominant in the nearest future. Else, the agri-tech, including biologicals, AI as well as alt protein, carbon trading, blockchain & crypto may effectively be utilized, at their full, at the regional level in agriculture. Case studies illustrative of the examples of food system reform in regional countries may be presented, in the above regard.

## V. ECO Intra-Trade

### Research topic:

#### **What are the best ways to increase intra-regional trade among the ECO countries?**

#### Summary

- The ECO intra-regional trade reached US\$44.3 billion, lately. The global trade has contracted during the covid-19 reigning period. According to the UNCTAD Investment Trends Monitor (24 January 2021), the global foreign direct investment (FDI) fell to US\$859 billion (42%) in 2020 from \$1.5 trillion in 2019. While the pandemic still holds on to its grip the global economies are recovering one after another. Against the global background, what would be intra-regional trade flow forecasts in the short, medium and long run in the ECO region? How will ECO intra-trade bounce back to its pre-pandemic levels of the 9.3% share of the regional total trade in 2016? In this, what measures will further be required?
- The pandemic has caused the supply chains to disrupt; these are now moving along the re-shoring of production of critical goods. The World Trade Organization (WTO) expects the 8% increase in the global trade volumes in 2021 against the 2020's 5.3% decline (according to the WTO press-release 876).

## VI. Human Resources and Sustainable Development

### Research topic:

#### **Post covid-19 recovery: driving force of Health in bringing the economies back to pre-covid-19 normalcy**

#### Summary

Health is any given region's bell that rings to prepare the regional community for the post covid-19 and potentially Delta-related requirements. The world's regions are moving toward adopting the post pandemic policies. In this regard, how can the situation with ECO countries be described in their paths of developing post covid-19 resilient health systems policies? Research works along this path will be required.

## **B. Criteria**

Timeliness, Accuracy, and Completeness

### **C. Editorial Advice**

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