

***The 32nd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council of ECO***

**Working Paper on**

**Economic Research & Statistics**

Prepared by ECO Secretariat (PMS)

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Contents

[ECONOMIC RESEARCH & STATISTICS 3](#_Toc87529248)

[STATISTICS 7](#_Toc87529249)

[Priority Area No.1: 7](#_Toc87529250)

[Cooperation among ECO National Statistical Offices (NSOs) 7](#_Toc87529251)

[ECO Vision 2025 target: 7](#_Toc87529252)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 8](#_Toc87529253)

[Priority Area No. 2: 9](#_Toc87529254)

[ECO Data Bank 9](#_Toc87529255)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 11](#_Toc87529256)

[Priority area No. 3 11](#_Toc87529257)

[Statistical developments through projects using ECO’s regional linkages 11](#_Toc87529258)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 12](#_Toc87529259)

[Priority area No. 4: 12](#_Toc87529260)

[ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSI) 12](#_Toc87529261)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 13](#_Toc87529262)

[Priority area No. 5: 14](#_Toc87529263)

[ECO Statistical Report 14](#_Toc87529264)

[Expected outcomes for 2021 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 15](#_Toc87529265)

[Priority area No. 6: 16](#_Toc87529266)

[ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme 16](#_Toc87529267)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 18](#_Toc87529268)

[Conclusions on the activity area: 18](#_Toc87529269)

[ECONOMIC RESEARCH 19](#_Toc87529270)

[Priority Area No.7: 19](#_Toc87529271)

[ECO Annual Economic Report (EAER) 19](#_Toc87529272)

[ECO Vision 2025 target: 19](#_Toc87529273)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 21](#_Toc87529274)

[Priority Area No. 8: 21](#_Toc87529275)

[ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) 21](#_Toc87529276)

[ECO Vision target: 21](#_Toc87529277)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 24](#_Toc87529278)

[Priority area No. 9: 25](#_Toc87529279)

[ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) 25](#_Toc87529280)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 26](#_Toc87529281)

[Priority area No. 10: 26](#_Toc87529282)

[ECO Economic Journal (EEJ) 26](#_Toc87529283)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 28](#_Toc87529284)

[Priority area No. 11: 29](#_Toc87529285)

[ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum 29](#_Toc87529286)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 31](#_Toc87529287)

[Priority area No. 12: 32](#_Toc87529288)

[ECO Research Centre (ERC) 32](#_Toc87529289)

[Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations: 32](#_Toc87529290)

[Conclusions on the activity area: 33](#_Toc87529291)

[Summary of Secretariat’s proposed recommendations in the area of Statistics and Economic Research: 34](#_Toc87529292)

[Annex-I. Calendar of Events for 2022/23 36](#_Toc87529293)

# ECONOMIC RESEARCH & STATISTICS

**Executive summary**:

1. During the reported period, the area of Economic Research & Statistics have seen a series of forward looking adjustments relating to:

**STATISTICS**:

1. The ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSIs) have been updated based on the inputs from the Member States. These have been posted on ECO web. They are now available on web page: “ERS”.
2. “*Comprehensive Medium and Long Term Strategic Plan for Statistics*” has been reviewed to cover the period of 2021-2026. They were fully discussed and then adopted for implementation at the 5th Meeting of the Heads of National Statistical Offices (ECO-NSOs) held on 29th June, 2021. The component of “knowledge and expertise sharing” was supplemented to the Strategic Plan, following the proposals of the Member States.
3. Based on the nominations of the Member States, the ECO National Focal Points (NFPs) for Statistics have been institutionalized. The List has been posted on ECO web, web sub-page “Statistics”.
4. **ECONOMIC RESEARCH**:

**Economic Research Programme (EERP)**

1. Of the total seven economic research projects, the three have been reported to have budget balance residuals. The need now is to re-allocate residuals to other new projects in the framework of the EERP.
2. In sum, the number of completed research projects under the ECO Economic Research Programme is seven (7), till present. They were completed in the period 2010-2013 and in 2019. The 6th Meeting of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) held on December 7, 2021 considered the new composition of the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) so that the EERP include economic research projects for the period of 2022-2023 and onwards.
3. For the purposes of regular oversight and coordination of economic research activities at the ECO regional level, the nominations of the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the ECO Member States in the area of Economic Research have duely been related to ECO Secretariat. The-said esteemed nominations have been institutionalized. The list has been posted on ECO web, web page “Economic Research”.
4. For the purposes of publishing ECO’s regional economic scholarly products, the newly appointed Members of the ECO Editorial Board (EB) of the ECO Economic Journal (EEJ) have been institutionalized. They will now need to select, from amongst the membership of the ECO Editorial Board, an Editor-in-Chief and lay down new Terms of reference of the EB-EEJ. Alternatively, they may revive the previous Terms of reference.
5. In the area of cooperation on brainwave amongst the ECO’s regional think tank institutions, the Charter of the ECO Research Center (ERC) was signed by the Republic of Turkey and Republic of Azerbaijan on the sidelines of the 14th Summit Meeting of the Heads of State/Governments of the ECO Member States, held on 4th March 2021 on virtual mode. The ECO Secretariat forwarded several note verbals to the Member States encouraging them to accede to this document.
6. It may be noted that the ECO Research Center (ERC) was established in compliance with Para XXII of the 9th Summit of ECO and the endorsement of the 20th COM (2012) following the decision of the 2nd Meeting of ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research held in 2012. It has therefore been established as the ECO’s regional institution in line with Article XXVI of the Treaty of Ismir.
7. The aim of the ECR is “to help ECO to build regional cooperation on the solid research-based foundation with a view of ensuring concrete results. To that effect, the ECR shall develop, among others, various econometric models, economic analyses tools, economic and macroeconomic policies as well provide economic advisory and develop impact assessment criteria” (an excerpt from the Charter of the Economic Research Center, Article I).
8. Major current trends in the area of Statistics, at global level: world’s statistical agencies today tend to generate income-growth data mainly for the National System of Accounts (NSA)-covered population. To that end, the distinctive stratas of population that are vital for human livelihood under the current conditions of the covid-19 pandemic remain largely unattended. The unattended statistical indicators include: distributive income-growth statistics for ‘middle class’, for ‘working class’ and, for high income class i.e. ‘rich’. The latter socio-demographic strata accounts to 0.1 to 1 percent of population. As with the recently agreed increase in progressive wealth tax by the Group of 20, the income-growth statistics may acquire more prominence in the ECO region as well, following world’s current statistics trend. Such motion, if taken on in ECO, would be important as most of the ECO countries aspire joining a row of the upper middle income countries in their economic development paths.
9. Current status in the area of Statistics, at national levels of the ECO Member States: ECO National Statistical Offices (ECO NSOs) continue stepping up the Covid-19 Statistics. They are focusing more on: (i) Vital Statistics; (ii) Employment (through surveys of newly-emerging types of jobs under covid-19); (iii) surveys of gain/loss caused by covid-19. To that effect, the NSOs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Turkey and Islamic Republic of Pakistan ~~have~~ successfully interacted among one another via videoconferencing workshops/seminars.
10. Major current trends in the area of Economic Research, at global level: Some of world’s lead economists suggest that the epoch of wealth accumulation is over. According to this school of thought, repetitive cycles of asymmetric wealth accumulation followed by adaptive wage distributions cannot last forever. In reality, the rules for investors are currently changing. Capital asset pricing policies may accordingly change. In these circumstances, global challenges associated with post-pandemic economic recovery and the emergence of a new world order, under the pressing climate change requirements, acquire an increasing prominence, among others economic challenges of today.
11. Current status of the area of Economic Research, at national levels of the ECO Member States: Economic Research Institutes and Strategy Analyses Centers within structures of Ministries of Economy and Planning of the ECO Member States are intensifying the use of integration-focused research tools. One of them is “science laboratories” (labs). Such innovative tool is seen by many as a handle in liaising the best economic thought via the process of ‘opinionating’ to happen prior to actual discussions at platforms such as Economic Fora. In intensifying the integration-focused interaction on economic brainwave the potential of the newly established Economic Research Center (ERC) may be fully used.
12. At the ECO regional level, the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER), which was established in 2010, held on December 7, 2021 its 6th meeting to consider acute issues relating to the ECO regional economic research. It discussed policy and regional strategy support to the ECO’s core activity areas, including Transport & Communications, Trade & Investments, Energy, Minerals and Environment, Agriculture & Industry, Human Resources and Sustainable Development and Tourism.
13. Along the similar lines, the ECO Economic Journal (EEJ) has already announced a *Call for Papers. The* Journal is now accepting economic scholarly articles/papers/manuscripts for publishing in its nearest issue. Upon having been established in 2013, the ECO Editorial Board (EB) of the Journal prided its membership of renowned scientists-economists. Presently, a new membership has been institutionalized and thus the ECO Editorial Board should now function, at full length.

**Expected outcome of the Committee Session**:

1. At the back of the current dynamics observed in the ECO Member States in the area of Economic Research & Statistics, the Council may recommend that the ECO Secretariat take necessary actions to further improve: (i) ECO Data Bank, (ii) implement a newly adopted “Comprehensive Medium and Long Term Strategic Plan on Statistics for 2021-2026” and, (iii) strengthen project implementation capacities on Economic Research & Statistics in the ECO Member States, to facilitate accelerated economic growth in the ECO Region.
2. The Council may encourage constructive involvement of the ECO National Statistical Offices (ECO NSOs) and Economic Research Institutes (ERIs) of relevant Ministries of Economy/Planning of ECO Member States to supplement the *ECO Work Programme* *2022/23* with new project proposals to be embedded in the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) in the course of the deliberations of the 32nd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council of ECO (16-19 January 2022, ECO Secretariat).

# STATISTICS

## Priority Area No.1:

## Cooperation among ECO National Statistical Offices (NSOs)

## ECO Vision 2025 target:

1. The **ECO Vision 2025** has envisaged “to make the Organization better equipped to face challenges and advance the fundamental principles of the Organization to expand project based economic activities and develop and strengthen the ECO institutions” (“*Implementation Framework of ECO Vision 2025*” p.1).

Background

1. The activity area of Statistics in ECO is being governed by the “**ECO Framework for Cooperation on Statistics** among the ECO Members States”. This sectoral document was adopted at the 1st Meeting of the Heads of National Statistical Offices (ECO NSOs) on 28-29 January 2008, Tehran (I.R. Iran). In the current year, the Heads of the National Statistical Offices of the ECO Member States have gathered at their 5th Meeting on 29 June 2021 at ECO Secretariat (virtual mode). The said Meeting was preceded by the 7th High Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics. For over a decade, the Heads of ECO NSOs have effectively been managing the most challenging issues relating to the Official Statistics under ECO’s platform.
2. In regard of the event, which had preceded the above-noted Meeting, the 28th Regional Planning Council (RPC) of ECO (December 2017, Islamabad) noted its appreciation of the kind efforts of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for willingness to host the 4th Meeting of Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSO) and 6th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Statistics in 2019.

Latest developments:

1. Along the similar lines, the 29th Regional Planning Council Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) appreciated the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for confirming to host the 5th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSO) and 7th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting in 2020. Due to the covid-19-imposed travel restrictions, the event has pushed through to its realization in 2021, in virtual mode, at ECO Secretariat.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may invite interested Member States to hold the 6th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSO) and 8th ECO High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEGM) in virtual mode during 2022.
2. The Council may also instruct the Secretariat to draft the Agenda of Meeting in close consultations with the Chair of the Meeting, in the common interest of the ECO Member States, to include the proposals and suggestions and views of the National Statistical Offices of the ECO Member States.

## Priority Area No. 2:

## ECO Data Bank

Background:

1. The ECO Statistical Network (ECOSTAT) was established on 7th June 2009 upon approval of the 149th Council of ECO Permanent Representatives’ Meeting. It presented to the ECO Member States a comprehensive, complete and harmonized statistical database. By status quo, it served as a regional hub enabling common access to the ECO-specific statistical data indicators for all Member States. By its technical characteristics, ECOSTAT presented an IT solution as it provided free exchange tool for statistical data by provision of services via in-built data sharing mechanism specifically designed for the ECO Member States.
2. Currently, the ECO’s key statistical indicators (ECOKSIs) have been updated based on primary input data of the Member States. The ECOKSIs are tailored to suit ECO’s specific data needs. The Compendium is now in full compliance with the fundamental principles of the Official Statistics.
3. At onset, the set consisting of 300 indicators had carefully been selected by the ECO Member States. That had been commensurate to ECO’s core activity areas’ statistical data and economic information needs. For user friendly apprehension of ECO’s statistical products, the “Compendium of ECOKSIs” was compiled based on the proposals and suggestions of the Member States.
4. For practical purposes, the ECOKSIs are the tools for ECO’s broad regional users in their search of a single point information about the status of ECO, particularly, in intent to know how are ECO’s countries being represented from the perspectives of intra-regional and cross-sector linkages internally (from within ECO region) and externally (ECO vis-vis the rest of the world). Likewise, ECO’s statistical products are in demand by many the industrial users. The ECO statistical data and economic information are needed for deriving numeric forecasts by relevant structures in the industrial sector. Such is needed for the purposes of investing capital in the ECO regional development and growth.

Latest developments:

1. Based on the proposals of the Member States, with the objective to provide broad ECO regional users with ECO-specific statistical data and economic information, harmonious with current statistical trends, including the Covid-19 Statistics, Digitisation & Big Data, the Council may acknowledge the proposals of the Member States that related in the reporting period to statistics trainings for the ECO National Statistical Offices (NSOs). To that effect, the Republic of Turkey, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Islamic Republic of Iran availed essential practices in fast-track trainings on statistics during 2021. To extend the scope of the impact from aforementioned trainings, the aforementioned statistical institutions of the ECO Member States may offer rigorous trainings to the remaining ECO Member States during 2022.
2. In June 2019 the ECO Secretariat initiated a newly formatted data collection questionnaire, designed under the “ECO Data Bank” concept. The latter has been tailored to address the needs on: (i) Knowledge and expertise sharing, (ii) Intensive cooperation on regional statistical projects and activities, (iii) Statistical capacity building and, (iv) Improvement of Human Resources Development (HRD)-related indicators, especially in view that most ECO countries are aspiring to join the row of world’s upper middle income countries.
3. In the above regard, the ECO Secretariat appreciates the efforts of the National Statistical Offices of the ECO Member States in their expeditiously responding with relevant statistical data and economic information as feedback to ECO Secretariat’s Note Verbale No. PERS/ECO Data Bank/2019/542 dated 01.07.2019.
4. The ECO Secretariat appreciates statistical data contributions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan who also contributed to the “ECO Data Bank” by providing Statistical Year Book and detailed Appendices as done by the Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Kazakhstan.
5. Special token of the Council’s appreciation is to the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan who have set exemplary patterns for the Member States to follow in comprehensive display forms of their relevant data, comparable and internationally harmonised.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may recommend that the National Statistical Offices of the Member States may relate to the Secretariat their relevant proposals, suggestions, views in regard of the Agenda of the 6th Meeting of the Heads of National Statistical Offices of ECO Member States and the 8th High Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics to be held during 2022.

## Priority area No. 3

## Statistical developments through projects using ECO’s regional linkages

Background:

1. One of flagship projects previously implemented by the ECO NSOs within the ECO region was the ECO-FAO project titled: “*Support for the Implementation and Development of the CountryStat Framework in the ECO countries*”. Considerable effort was exerted in this regard by the ECO NSOs of: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Turkey and Islamic Republic of Pakistan, among others. The project was primarily designed to assist the I. R. of Afghanistan in its statistical development through cooperative efforts of ECO NSOs.
2. Given that country-stat is a practice-proven tool for improvement of statistics in world’s diverse regions, further development of country-stat is to be included in Work Programme 2022. It is to follow ECO-FAO good project implementation practices. In that regard, a new initiative, which builds on the proposals of the Member States, has been put forward. The content of the project document is to be discussed in technical detail by the 8th High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEGM) on Statistics during 2022.

Latest developments:

Previously, the international and regional organizations, including FAOSTAT and SESRIC have been approached by ECO Secretariat for the subject matter of the continual cooperation in the area of development of country-stat to which encouraging feedbacks have been received via regular working interactions.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may request interested Member States to forward to the Secretariat their concrete project proposals to be included in the “ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme”. The following prerequisite information details relating to new projects to be proposed by Member States are: (a) purpose, goal and objectives of a new project (b) project location, (c) an estimated project budget - should be forwarded to the ECO Secretariat. Such new project proposals, upon receipt by ECO Secretariat, will then furthered for consideration and approval by the 8th HLEGM on Statistics during 2022.

# Priority area No. 4:

# ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSI)

Background:

1. As noted earlier in this document, the ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSIs) represent a selective set of ECO-specific statistical indicators that are compiled via ECO Compendium of KSIs. At the onset, the *Framework for Cooperation on Statistics* *among the ECO Member States* envisaged that ECOKSIs shall service with necessary data the very processes of implementation of ECO’s major initiatives, including the ECOTA, ECO Scheme for Trade, Energy, Transport and Industrial Cooperation etc (Basic Documents).
2. In line with fundamental principles of Official Statistics regulating the processing and display of statistical data and economic information, the Secretariat may be instructed by the Council to start collecting data for the period of 2021/23, which will then be processed, validated and added to the ECO Data Bank storage base. The previously collected data set encompassed the time series starting from 2010-2016, 2014-2017 and 2017-2020. The planned periodicity in data collection enables coherence and continuity in the ECO Data Bank functionalities.

Latest developments:

1. The Note Verbale to be released by the Secretariat in regard of planned data collection for the period of 2022/23 will be released after the 32nd Regional Planning Council meeting finalizes.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. To facilitate Official Statistics’ processes, the Council may request for the nominations of the designated Contact Points at National Statistical Offices (ECO NSOs) of the Member States for the ECO Data Bank. These persons should be able to operate on-line display of statistical data/information. They will be required to fill in ECO-generated data templates designed for ECO Data Bank. They will key in aforementioned data from their desk stations at their relevant ECO NSOs. The rationale behind such request is that the Contact Points stationed at ECO NSOs of the ECO Member States will be responsible for accuracy of primary input data of ECO Data Bank. They will also be answerable for monitoring the functionalities of the ECO Data Bank.
2. The Council may request the ECO Secretariat to prepare and circulate to the Member States the time schedule of planned data collection activities.
3. The Council may also suggest that ECO Secretariat take up further steps, at its side of ECO Data Bank, by developing a user friendly IT-formatted design of the ECO Data Bank, to make it easy for visual apprehension and use.
4. The Council may instruct the Secretariat to also display via digital format the data collection plans, data release calendars and templates of data collection questionnaires as well as the information on the review statistical procedures, to minimize the burden on data providers.

## Priority area No. 5:

## ECO Statistical Report

Background:

1. Following the request reflected in paragraph-15 of the 29th Regional Planning Council (*ECO Secretariat, Tehran, 17-20 December 2018)* for the Member States to provide the Secretariat with relevant data for the publication of the updated “ECO Statistical Report”, such document was prepared, based on timely input data of the Member States. The ECO NSOs statistical year books have also been provided for ECO’s use in that regard.
2. During 2021, the 31st Regional Planning Council (RPC) of ECO (January 12-21, 2021, ECO Secretariat, virtual mode) in paragraph-15 of its Work Programme 2021 (I. Sector: Economic Research & Statistics), has instructed the Secretariat to: (i) compile, (ii) consolidate and (iii) circulate the draft ECO Statistical Report.
3. In the above regard, the “ECO Statistical Report 2021” was discussed in detail during the 5th Meeting of the Heads of National Statistical Offices (ECO NSOs) and 7th High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEGM) on Statistics on June 29, 2021 at Secretariat (virtual mode) and, approved thereupon. It is now available on ECO web, under Economic Research & Statistics (ERS), web page “Economic Research”.
4. Given that ECO Secretariat practiced, in the past, the preparations and issue of aforementioned reports with the focus on specific sector, the 2021 issue of the ECO Statistical Report was dedicated to Agriculture and Industry. It may be noted that a “Special Statistical Report for Trade” was prepared, in the past.
5. During 2021, the 31st Regional Planning Council (RPC) through paragrpaph-14 of *Work Programme 2021, I. Sector: Economic Research & Statistics*) instructed the ECO Secretariat to work on systematic improvements to minimize the time lag between the reference period and the publication date of its international statistical publications, among others, Statistical Bulletins.
6. In the above regard, the “ECO Statistical Bulletin 2021” was prepared and discussed in greater detail during the 5th Meeting of Heads of National Statistical Offices (ECO NSOs) and 7th High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEGM) on Statistics on June 29, 2021 at Secretariat (virtual mode) and, approved thereupon. It is now available on ECO web under Economic Research & Statistics (ERS), web page “Statistics”. The ECO specific focus in this publication has been on Transport and Communications.

Latest developments:

1. To facilitate the regular oversight and coordination over statistical developments in the ECO Region, ECO Member States have nominated their relevant representatives as the ECO National Focal Points (NFPs) for the area of Statistics.
2. The ECO Secretariat would be grateful to receive substantative proposals from the Member States via the ECO National Focal Points on Statistics in regard of new project proposals that will be embedded in the “ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme”, and also suggestions for virtually hosting the training workshops and seminars and related events for the ECO Member States. The themes of the latter events may be proposed by the Member States. The proposed ECO Calendar of Events 2022/23 is in Annex.

### Expected outcomes for 2021 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may confirm that the Member States agreed that the ECO Secretariat may use, for the purposes of ECO Regional Statistics, the relevant online country statistical yearbooks or other publications reflecting statistical indicators of the Member States. In so doing special emphasis may be put on the ECO’s core activity areas, including (i) Trade & Investments, (ii) Transport & Communications, (iii) Energy, Minerals and Environment, (iv) Agriculture & Industry and, (v) Tourism.
2. The Council may instruct that the Secretariat continuously work on systematic improvements to release statistical products, including ECO Statistical Report (sector-specific) and ECO Statistical Bulletin/s.
3. The Council may likewise instruct that the Secretariat, in its part of shared responsibilities for ECO Regional Statistical Reporting, will have to: (i) compile, (ii) consolidate and (iii) circulate draft ECO Statistical Report 2021/22 and one for 2023 by having them considered at relevant meetings of the ECO NSO of the Member States. In that regard, the Council may instruct the Secretariat to use the best national data sources in compiling international statistics, and also, follow the UN “Recommended Practices on the Use of Non-Official Sources in International Statistics”, in this regard.

## Priority area No. 6:

## ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme

Background

1. During the 29th RPC Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) the proposal of the Republic of Tajikistan to include a Training Course titled: *“Innovations in methodology through new technology in conducting population census”* in the ECO Calendar of Events 2019 was noted. The event was to be conducted in one of the Member States. Since, in 2020, travel restrictions had been ubiquitous, the Council may suggest that the latter event realize in 2022, in virtual mode. Any of ECO Member States may volunteer conducting this training.
2. The 29th RPC Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and also, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic States (SESRIC) to provide technical assistance on statistics to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. While the offer of technical assistance to Afghanistan has been addressed via the joint ECO-FAO project proposal, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the SESRIC at Ankara are being encouraged to name the date and venue of the training course for Afghanistan to be organized during 2022.
3. The 29th Regional Planning Council Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) noted with satisfaction the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the ECO, SESRIC and the Economic Policy and Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV). It requested the ECO Secretariat to initiate intensive collaboration for utilizing enhanced economic research and training capabilities of partner institutes. The ECO Secretariat approached the SESRIC and the latter Organization’s budget, during 2020, had insufficient resources, but SESRIC has been agreeable to accommodate cooperative ECO-SESRIC activities in the subsequent year, i.e., 2022.
4. More specifically, the ECO Secretariat approached SESRIC for initiating joint statistical activities under the MoU to which the response has been that such activities will be during 2022. In this regard, ECO Secretariat would appreciate the substantive proposals in regard of the joint ECO-SESRIC statistical cooperation from SESRIC.
5. During the 31st Regional Planning Council of ECO (January 12-21, 2021, ECO Secretariat, virtual mode), it was noted that Statistics is the axis area to which other economic sectors’ interdependencies naturally gravitate. The Council pointed out that Statistics is universally recognized as the core basis for comprehensive decision-and policy making. In that regard, the Council may instruct the Secretariat to prepare a policy paper on central coordinating role of ECO Regional Statistics with pertinence to regional data and information development and exchange.

Latest developments:

1. During 2019, the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and Pacific (SIAP) invited ECO as its partner organization to the “Management Seminar” in Chiba (Japan) on 11-12 December, 2019. The event was organized by SIAP for the Heads of NSOs of countries of Asia and the Pacific, to discuss the issues relating to “Future of Economic Statistics”.
2. During 2021, ECO Secretariat has approached SIAP with the suggestion to conduct joint training on the topic of mutual interest; SIAP’s feedback is being awaited. In the past, the joint activities were focused on Informal Sector Statistics.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may suggest that the Secretariat actively cooperate via liaising with its long-term partner organizations to ensure further support to the ECO Member States in their statistical capacity building and project implementation on statistics.
2. In drawing technical assistance and other support for the ECO Regional Statistics-related activities, the Council may instruct that the Secretariat actively collaborate with its long-term traditional international partners, including UNSD, FAOSTAT, SIAP, UNESCAP, and EUROSTAT, with the objective to implement previous and new proposals of the Member States in regard of the ECO regional trainings, including workshops/seminars/courses/webinars. The latter events could be grouped under the ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme. Implementation may start in 2022 and onward. In practical terms, the themes for regional trainings, as with support of ECO’s international partners, have been proposed as follows:
3. *“COVID-19 Statistics”;*
4. *“Vital Statistics and Civil Registration”;*
5. *“Innovations in methodology through new technology in conducting population census”;*
6. *“Unemployment and Informal Sector Statistics”;*
7. *“Digitisation and Big Data”*
8. In the above regard, the Council may welcome the Member States’ proposals of new projects under ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme, particularly relating to the aforementioned themes.

## Conclusions on the activity area:

1. Official Statistics is indispensable for enabling the dynamism of economic growth. It feeds growth processes with accurate, credible, impartial statistics. It is to provide groundwork for decision and policy makers. Bearing in mind that all statistical releases of ECO should be endorsed by the internally established statistics governance mechanism as per the principles of governance of international statistical activities, ECO focuses on regular functionalities of ECO Data Bank. To ensure the above-stated, ECO Data Bank’s software design and digital applications would require further improvements, in addition to the online framework of “ECO Data Bank. Such requirements may be handled through ECO’s partner support and active participation of the ECO NSOs.
2. On the one hand, cooperation with ECO’s long term international partners such as UNSD, UNSIAP, UNESCAP, FAOSTAT, EUROSTAT, SESRIC, IRTI, and UNDP is to help improve ECO Regional Statistics’ processes by strengthening statistical professional skill in the Member States and soft power base tools.
3. In sum, active participation of the Member States via the ECO NSOs would be welcomed in line with the core principles of solidarity complementarity and international cooperation and support.

# ECONOMIC RESEARCH

## Priority Area No.7:

## ECO Annual Economic Report (EAER)

## ECO Vision 2025 target:

1. It has been envisaged in the **ECO Vision 2025** that “the core mandate of the Economic Cooperation Organization is economic development and regional integration”. In this regard, ***ECO Vision 2025*** particularly emphasized “Economic Growth and Productivity” as one of the core cooperation areas of the ECO (Section 3, “Co-operation Areas”, sub-section “E”, “Implementation Framework of the ECO Vision 2025”, p.2).

Background

1. ECO Annual Economic Report (EAER) is, in observance of ECO practices, prepared following Article XXVI of the Treaty of Izmir. In so doing, it seeks to analyze economic situation in the Member States. The inputs to the EAER are provided by the Member States. The ECO Secretariat, in turn, prepares analyses of the performance of economic sectors of ECO through their alignment with the ECO’s core activity areas.
2. The Member States are keen in seeing an upward economic growth in the ECO Region toward firm sustainability. This is especially important for bringing in the regional economy to its pre-covid19 normalcy. Therefore, to enable the ECO high level policy and decision makers to adopt timely and informed decisions on the economic development and growth of the Region, ECO’s regional economic publications should be timely.
3. In 2019, the 29th Regional Planning Council Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with their relevant country economic reports for 2017 so that Secretariat may consolidate relevant inputs and prepare ECO Annual Economic Report.
4. The 29th Regional Planning Council Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) further requested the Member States to nominate their respective Focal Points for Economic Research for follow-up and coordination of publishing the ECO Annual Economic Report 2017.

Latest developments:

1. During 2019, the Secretariat circulated a reminder to Member States requesting for country economic reports long due, to enable the Secretariat to release ECO Annual Economic Report (Note Verbale No. PERS/ECOSTAT/EER/2019/774 dated 18.09.2019). Similarly, via Note Verbale No. PERS/EER/2019/779 dated 24/09/2020 the Secretariat has re-iterated its request for input information from the Member States.
2. Further, the 31st Regional Planning Council of ECO (paragraph-33, *Work Programme 2021, I. Section: Economic Research & Statistics*) requested the Member States (except for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan) to forward to the Secretariat, by 15th March 2021, their respective country economic reports or other economic analyses for the period of January-November 2020, for further consolidation of inputs and preparing ECO Annual Economic Report 2019/2020.
3. During 2021, the Member States have timely responded to the Secretariat’s request. As a result, the ECO Annual Economic Report 2019/2020 has been prepared and its draft circulated to the Member States for views (Note Verbale No. ERS/2021/1219 dated 8/11/2021).

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may request the Member States for inputs for the ECO Annual Report for the period 2021/22.
2. The Council may instruct that ECO Secretariat avail of accessible official data sources and/or online official publications of relevant authorities (mainly, Ministries of Economy and Planning) of the Member States in areas of economic research and country strategy development.

## Priority Area No. 8:

## ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER)

## ECO Vision target:

1. The ***ECO Vision 2025*** has envisaged “integration” as one of the core principles of the Organization (Section 2. “Core principles”, ECO Vision 2025, p.1).

Background

1. As noted earlier in the present Working Paper, new membership of the “ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research” (EPSCER) has been institutionalized based on official nominations of the ECO Member States.
2. One of the EPSCER’s key responsibilities is to develop and periodically review the ECO Plan of Action (PoA) on Economic Research. The initial PoA was based on the four pillars: Pillar 1: Development of the “ECO Economic Development Strategy”; Pillar 2: Integration of ECO Member States via economic research by way of brainwave; Pillar 3: Implementing the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) and Pillar 4: Provision of accurate analytical economic publications to the ECO’s high level decision making bodies.
3. As a background, the EPSCER at its second Meeting in 2013 adopted the decision to initiate the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP). The main goal of the latter Programme was set forth to resolve prolonged implementation of sectoral projects in Directorates of ECO Secretariat. Such step was meant to enable sectoral Directorates to involve in action-based projects with practical demonstration impact, rather than research projects.
4. At onset, the 19th RPC Meeting (Tehran, 12-14 January, 2009) endorsed the following economic research projects: (1) “AlternativeEnergy Resources in ECO region”; (2) Competitive Goods and Services in ECO region”, (3) “Prospects of Intra-trade in ECO region”, Coordinating country-**Kazakhstan**; (4) “Economic Management Modelling in ECO countries”, Coordinating country – **Pakistan**; (5) “Comparative Study on the Linkage between Energy Consumption and Population Dynamics in the ECO Countries: *a new view toward MDGs*”, Coordinating country-**Iran** (based on UNFPA’s funding), and (6)“Status and Perspectives of ECO Member States’ Economic Development”. The implementation of the latter research project has been contributed by **Iran** (Coordinating country) on gratuity basis with Implementing Agency being the University of Tehran.
5. Thus, the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) had, initially, been compiled of the aforementioned economic research projects. The second of the former two was replaced by Pakistan-proposed project titled “Analyzing Food Security Issues in the ECO region”. Further, the EERP was supplemented by Azerbaijan-proposed research project on economic modeling titled: “Exchange of experiences and strengthening of inter-agency cooperation on the development of ecologically clean agriculture model in ECO Member Countries”.
6. At implementation side, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Islamic Republic of Iran have fulfilled their assigned projects well on time. The research projects by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Azerbaijan were fulfilled in 2019. The final reports on the latter two have well been received by ECO Secretariat. Both, the Project Implementing Agencies are the widely-renowned high performing economic research institutions functioning under relevant Ministries of Economy in both the Member States. These, notably are: the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and the Institute for Scientific Research on Economic Reforms (ISRER) of Republic of Azerbaijan.
7. As with the successful completion of aforementioned research projects, the need now is to disseminate best project governance and implementation practices in regard of the two aforementioned projects at region-wide level of ECO.
8. Likewise, based on positive outcomes of all research projects as mandated in the framework of the EERP, the need now is to initiate new economic research projects under the ECO Economic Research Programme for the period 2022-23 and onward.
9. The EPSCER, in the above regard, carries out general oversight over the implementation of the EERP. Among EPCSER’s other responsibilities is its central coordinating role in realizing the regional “integration” amongst Member States via economic research. Such responsibility was necessitated by the **ECO Vision 2025** tasks. In line with the *ECO Vision 2025’s* conceptualization of the process of “integration”, the advancement of integrational activities that target economic growth, including via economic research, is ever acute for ECO.
10. Thus, during 2013-2014, the Members of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) were able to: (i) analyze, (ii) provide academic citation and peer review, (iii) issue certificates of confirmation of abstracts/articles/papers and, (iv) confirm the selection of 80 economic research papers out of the total number of 300 academic papers initially submitted to ECO Secretariat. The EPSCER Members were also able to sit through all scientific panel sessions of the ECO Economic Forum with the objective to select the finalist 10 awardees from aforementioned 80 papers that received detailed deliberations during the three days’ Forum proceedings (September, 2013). The authors were granted Certificates of Awards signed by ECO for “*ECO* *Best Economic Research*” and valuable gifts on behalf of the Organization. The papers of the finalist awardees, discussed and selected by the ECO Economic Forum, were then published in the ECO Economic Journal (EEJ).

Latest developments:

1. The Council may instruct the Secretariat to analyze and disseminate the good project governance and implementation practices at ECO regional level for the two projects: “Exchange of experiences and strengthening of inter-agency cooperation on the development of ecologically clean agriculture model in ECO Member Countries” (Project Implementing Agency: ISRER, Republic of Azerbaijan) and “Analyzing Food Security Issues in the ECO region” (Project Implementing Agency: PIDE, I.R. Pakistan).
2. The Council may instruct the EPSCER to carry out full oversight over the matters relating to the ECO Economic Research Programme and ensure that its new content of economic research projects be equitable in terms of representation of all six ECO’s core activity areas through economic research themes.
3. The Council may instruct the ECO Secretariat to start preparations for the ECO Economic Forum to be arranged jointly with the ECO Economic Research Center (ERC) during 2022/23.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. As indicated earlier in the present document, new Membership of ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) is now in place and, in that regard, the Council may instruct the Secretariat to create the digital ‘science lab’ styled platform for the Members of EPSCER to enable their working interactions within ECO digitalized interface.
2. The Council may recommend that the **7th Meeting of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER)** be organized during 2022 and, in that regard, instruct the Secretariat to draft the tentative Draft Agenda of the said Meeting, based on the proposals/suggestions of the Member States.

## Priority area No. 9:

## ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP)

Background

1. ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) was reflected in the text of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 16 January 2018 between the ECO and SESRIC.
2. Since the time of signing of the MoU, the activities envisaged in the framework of the EERP have mainly been focused on follow-up with the pace of the EERP implementation upon which completion; new economic research projects may be formulated.
3. In the above regard, based on the proposals of the Member States that the countries may put forward during the deliberations of the 32nd Regional Planning Council Meeting (16-19 January 2022, ECO Secretariat) jointly with SESRIC may formulate the new content of the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) and, in that regard, foresee a series of training exercises for strengthening the effects of the expected outputs of economic research projects. Along similar lines, rigorous trainings would be needed at pre-completion stage of research projects, for the purposes of sensitizing among the Member States expected results of the projects.
4. It may be borne in mind that not only that the EERP has completed its assigned research projects via multiple economic analyses, modeling/economic simulations’ tests and evaluations by lead economists of the ECO region, but it has also enabled a series of intensive training workshops on modern tools of economic modeling that were organized by ECO, jointly with International Economic Modeling Network Center (EcoMod), at the back of the full funding support from the latter Center.

Latest developments:

1. ECO Programme on Economic Research (EERP) has successfully been carried out till present. The last three study projects, notably, (1) “Economic Modeling in the ECO region”, (2) “Analyzing Food Security Issues in the ECO region”, (3) “Exchange of Experiences on Strengthening Inter-Agency Cooperation on the Ecologically Clean Model in Agriculture in the ECO region” have their 100 hard copy sets disseminated among the ECO Member States. All research projects completed in the framework of the EERP are now available on ECO web under “*Project Management Section*” web page: “*Programme*”.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may recommend that the ECO Editorial Board meet during 2022 to consider the abstracts of the above-stated last three projects that were completed in 2019 under the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) and share key findings of aforementioned economic research projects for publishing in the ECO Economic Journal and, thus, disseminating best economic research results at ECO regional level. The suggested measure is slightly behind the schedule but justified; because, during 2020 the core area of Economic Research was under reform process within structure of ECO Secretariat.
2. The Council may instruct the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) to ensure that new economic research projects be included in the ECO Economic Research Programme for implementation during 2022/23 and onward.

## Priority area No. 10:

## ECO Economic Journal (EEJ)

Background

1. The 29th RPC Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) requested the Member States to relate to the ECO Secretariat their relevant submissions of scholarly economic research papers for a due consideration by the ECO Editorial Board (EB) then publish them in the current issue of the “ECO Economic Journal” (EEJ).
2. The 29th RPC Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) requested the Member States, except the Republic of Turkey, to expedite their views on the “*Comprehensive Medium and Long Term Strategy for Improvements of the ECO Economic Journal*”.
3. To consider the views of the Member States relating to future improvements of the ECO Economic Journal (EEJ), the ECO Editorial Board was commissioned to meet in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2019 (para-8, Sector E. Projects, Economic Research and Statistics, Work Programme 2019/2020, p.54).
4. In 2019 the ECO Secretariat circulated a reminder Note Verbale No. PERS/EEJ/2019/135 dated 12.02.2020 wherewith the Member States except Republic of Turkey, were requested to expedite their views following the 29th RPC recommendations.
5. By the Terms of reference of the ECO Editorial Board, the Board is entitled to consider scholarly abstracts along with manuscripts that seek being published in the ECO Economic Journal (EEJ). In that regard, the Meeting of the ECO Editorial Board, previously scheduled for 2019 in Tehran (Iran) will now have to consider during 2021/22 the scholarly abstracts of manuscripts/papers/articles of scientist-economists and other professorship of the ECO Member States, for the purposes of publishing in the current issue of the EEJ.
6. Among abstracts, the ECO Editorial Board will also consider the ECO economic research projects-based findings as the result of completion of those projects, during 2019, in the framework of the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP), as previously planned. For the reason, that these projects were completed when economic research activity area of ECO has been under reforms within structure of ECO Secretariat; therefore, publishing of their findings will, post mortem, be in 2022.

Latest developments:

1. The Membership of the ECO Editorial Board has been institutionalized based on the nominations that have been received during 2021 from Member States. The Board is now full-fledged and functional.
2. The ECO Editorial Board is presently set forth to either revive its previous Terms of reference or develop the new one with the objective to assign the responsibilities among its Members, for peer review, selection of articles, obtaining relevant indexing for the EEJ, pre-publication clearance of articles.
3. The Membership of the Board, in line with ECO rules, may be expanded, if relevant proposals be related to the ECO Secretariat for that matter from Member States.
4. The *Call for Papers* has been announced via ECO web for the 2021-22 issue of the ECO Economic Journal.
5. Islamic Republic of Pakistan (via Note Verbale No.168 dated 28.02.2019) has, in 2019, provided the Secretariat with views/comments in response to the Secretariat’s Note Verbale (No. PERS/EEJ/2019/135 dated 12.02.2019) in regard of the “*Comprehensive Medium and Long Term Strategic Plan of the ECO Economic Journal*” 2016-2020. So have other ECO Member States, including Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
6. As with the proposals of the ECO Member States in regard of the aforementioned strategic plan in, the latter plan may be extended for the period of 2022-2027.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may recommend the ECO Editorial Board to select the Editor-in-Chief from among the nominated Members of the Board.
2. Assignment of responsibilities among the Members of the EEJ may focus concrete responsibilities, among others, such as obtaining ISSN index for the journal and developing a new or adhering to the previous Terms of reference of the Board.
3. The Council may also recommend that ECO Economic Journal via its ECO Editorial Board will continue its previous advances along the path of obtaining the ISSN code for the journal and ensure high quality editorials of the journal.
4. The Council may recommend that the release of the ECO Economic Journal be at the earliest possible.

## Priority area No. 11:

## ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum

Background

1. The ECO Economic Thank Tanks Forum were initiated in 2013 with the objective of gaining a regional magnitude of “integration” among the ECO Member States, including through economic research. International practices in functioning of world’s multiple economic think tank forums have proven effective, till present.
2. The idea of initiating the ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum had, at onset, been discussed during the First Meeting of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) in May 2010.
3. Further, the Republic of Azerbaijan, upon the decision of the aforementioned Meeting of EPSCER, organized the first ever ECO Economic Forum, which was held in Baku (Azerbaijan) in 2013. Prior to the realisation of the Forum, the Second Meeting of the EPSCER went through the details of the ECO Economic Forum, including: (i) scenario of conducting the Forum, (ii) draft contents of the Forum, (iii) sketch of provisional proceedings, (iv) organizational details of the Forum thereby ushering results-based fruition of actual proceedings and, finally (v) scholarly papers to be discussed at the Forum. Thus, based on the first practice-proved positive result, the second ECO Economic Forum pushed through in 2014.
4. To arrange for the third ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum, the 29th Regional Planning Council Meeting (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) requested the Member States to consider hosting the 3rd Preparatory of the ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum, to usher the 3rd ECO Economic Forum during 2022-23.

Latest developments:

1. During 2020, the Secretariat has analyzed the current statuses of ECO regional think tank institutions, as rated by the *2018 Global World Think Tank Rating Report* in eight ranking nominations for year 2018. Thus, the list of “world’s regional think tanks”, which included the ECO Member Countries’ thing tank institutions, was circulated to all Member States by the ECO Secretariat in February 2020.
2. Therefore, based on the pervious practices relating to the ECO Economic Forum, the Secretariat has announced the “*Call for Papers*” and invited submissions of scholarly articles/studies/reports/researches on the ECO-designated themes.
3. The Secretariat has also updated the List of “*ECO Lead Regional Research Institutions and Analytical Centers/Consultancies*”. The names of the institutions had been received from the Member States.
4. The papers to be selected by the Editorial Board following the “*Call for Papers*” should be included in the ECO Economic Journal (EEJ) subject for approval by the ECO Editorial Board, which has its Meeting on the sidelines of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSER).
5. As prerequisite arrangements for the think tank fora, the Member States (at their national levels) have deployed such mechanism as science laboratories (labs) that have proven effective over the recent years. The latters are viewed by many scientist-economists as non-experimental labs and rather handy networking labs for liaising amongst scientists-economists. Most importantly, those serve as an integration-ushering tool. Science labs also enable the opening of a line of discourses on selected economic research themes and topics in multiple sectors before such topics are brought up for actual discussions at platform of Economic Fora.
6. To ensure preparations of the 3rd ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum in 2022/23, the ECO Secretariat jointly with ECO Research Center (ERC) would need to hold the 3rd Meeting (Preparatory) for the aforementioned 3rd ECO Economic Forum with the practical objective of detailing organizational and contextual matters of the 3rd ECO Economic Forum to be held during 2022/23.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may instruct the Secretariat jointly with ECO Economic Research Center (ECR) to develop: (i) a sample online Format of the Forum; (ii) a set of requirements for online selection of papers of Forum; (iii) a set of unified requirements for IT-moderated conferencing tools to address the needs of auditorium expectations if the 3rd ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum holds in virtual mode.
2. In view of usefulness of a prerequisite tool of economic forums such as science labs, the Council may instruct the Secretariat to explore the aforementioned subject matter in greater detail to see whether it could be used in its application at the ECO regional level and circulate the ECO Member States the report on this matter.
3. The Council may also recommend that the ECO Secretariat develop, jointly with SESRIC, the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) in line with provisions of the MoU signed between ECO and SESRIC on 16 January 2018.
4. The Council may also recommend that the Secretariat approach other international economic research Centers/Institutions/Organizations having esteemed analytical and strategizing span ̶ for cooperation in the area of economic research.

## Priority area No. 12:

## ECO Research Centre (ERC)

Background

1. During the 29th RPC Meeting, the Republic of Azerbaijan informed that “the establishment of ECO Research Center (ERC) is under process and related documents will be submitted to the Secretariat, once completed”.

Recent developments:

1. The Charter of the ECO Economic Research Center (ERC) has been signed on 4th March 2021 on the sidelines of the 14th Summit of Heads of State/Governments of the ECO Member States at Ankara. The first countries signatories have been the Republic of Turkey and Republic of Azerbaijan.
2. Following the above pattern, the remaining Member States of ECO may also sign the Charter of the Economic Research Center. For that purpose, the Member States have been invited by the Republic of Azerbaijan, prior to the aforementioned Summit Meeting, to assign the Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited at Baku to visit the premises of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Azerbaijan in Baku whereupon sign the original version of the Charter of the ERC.

### Expected outcomes for 2022 and the Secretariat’s recommendations:

1. The Council may re-iterate the invitation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to all ECO Member States, except the Republic of Turkey and Republic of Azerbaijan, to sign the Charter of ECO Economic Research Center.
2. The Council may recommend that the ECO Economic Research Center start functioning at the earliest.
3. The Council may instruct the ECO Secretariat to, jointly with the ECO Economic Research Center, organize the 3rd ECO Economic Forum during 2022/23.

## Conclusions on the activity area:

1. Economic research is a brain of economic development. The ECO, being an inter-government international and regional Organization focusing on economic development and growth needs to have its own Economic Development Strategy (Short, Medium and Long-Term) and keep it abreast. The development of such important document can be qualitatively fulfilled by ECO lead scientist-economists of regional and/or global caliber. Scientific-economic profile of a regional scope, let alone global, comes through various fora, discussant platform. Such platform is also home for brainwave of new and innovative concepts/ideas picturing future economic trends in every economic sector’s development thereby shaping the trajectory of regional/global growth. Having a grip of such science-steering economic platform and be able to reap benefits from using it is, in its own self, an economic opportunity. Therefore, the benefits from economic research activities come from:
2. Economic fora, to analyze and evaluate current and future trajectory of regional economic strategies;
3. Economic analyses’ publications, to be compiled of papers discussed at Economic Fora;
4. Economist-scientists who stand at the fore front of regional economic fora and are, at the same, Members of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER) and ECO Editorial Board of ECO Economic Journal (EB-EEJ);
5. EPSCER to coordinate ECO regional economic research activities, including under EERP;
6. EB-EEJ to oversee regular issues of the ECO Economic Journal through rigorous peer review to ensure high quality editorials of EEJ;
7. Forum-generated concepts of new economic research projects to be implemented under the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) while reducing the lengthy time span between concept initiation and obtaining research project’s result.
8. In the light of the above, the development of the ECO Programme on Economic Research (EERP) jointly with SESRIC as envisaged in the MoU signed between ECO and SESRIC on 16 January 2018, promises sensible benefits to reap from the area of the ECO regional economic research.

# Summary of Secretariat’s proposed recommendations in the area of Statistics and Economic Research:

1. The deliberations of the Commission Meeting of the 32nd Regional Planning Council Meeting of ECO (January 16-19, 2022, ECO Secretariat, virtual mode) on the activity area of Economic Research & Statistics may consider finalizing the following key points:

**STATISTICS**:

1. Implementing the “Five Year Strategic Plan for Cooperation on Statistics for 2021-2026” focusing on the component for “Knowledge and Expertise Sharing”;
2. Regularly updating the ECO Data Bank via ECO Compendium of ECOKSIs and ensuring the improvement of the digital design of ECO Data Bank;
3. Ensuring regular international statistical reporting via ECO Statistical Report (special focus on ECO’s core areas) and Statistical Bulletin;
4. Ensuring adequate statistical capacity building among the ECO NSOs of the Member States via implementing the ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme, including rigid statistical trainings and statistics projects implementation;
5. Ensuring regular functioning of the platform of the Meeting of Heads of the ECO NSOs of the Member States and, in that regard, organizing, during 2022, the 6th Meeting of the Heads of ECO NSOs;
6. Ensuring regular functioning of the platform of the High Level Expert Group Meetings on Statistics and, in that regard, organizing the 8th HLGLM on Statistics, during 2022.

**ECONOMIC RESEARCH:**

1. Disseminating economic research good governance and implementation practices at the ECO regional level, based on successful completion of mandated economic research projects under the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP);
2. Collecting new economic research project proposals under the EERP focusing on acute economic policy and strategy development themes as well as on sector-based topics;
3. Formulating, jointly with SESRIC, a new content of the ECO Programme on Economic Research in line with the MoU between ECO and SESRIC signed on 16 January 2018;
4. Ensuring active, full-fledged functioning of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPSCER);
5. Ensuring active, full-fledged functioning of the ECO Editorial Board of ECO Economic Journal (EB-EEJ);
6. Release during 2022/23 the issue of the ECO Economic Journal at the earliest;
7. Organizing, jointly with ECO Economic Research Center (ERC) the 3rd preparatory Meeting of the 3rd ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum (virtual mode);
8. Ensuring regularly annual releases of the ECO Annual Economic Report (EAER).

**List of acronyms and abbreviations used in the Working Papers:**

ECO: Economic Cooperation Organization

RPC: Regional Planning Council

EAER: ECO Annual Economic Report

ERI: Economic Research Institutions

NSOs: National Statistical Offices

EPSCER: Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research

EB: Editorial Board

EEJ: ECO Economic Journal

EERP: ECO Economic Research Programme

ECOKSIs: ECO Key Statistical Indicators

UNSD: United Nations Statistics Department

SIAP: Statistical Institute for Asia and Pacific

UNESCAP: United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and Pacific

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

FAOSTAT: Food and Agriculture Organization Statistics

TICA: Turkish International Cooperation Agency

SESRIC: Statistical, Economic, Social Research and Information

Training Centre for Islamic Countries

#  Annex-I. Calendar of Events for 2022/23

**Economic Research and Statistics**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Event** | **Date** | **Venue** | **Host**  |
|  | **ECO Events** |  |  |  |
|  | **Statistics** |  |  |  |
| 1. | 6th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSO)  | 2022 | tbc | tbc |
| 2. | 8th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Statistics | 2022 | tbc | tbc |
| 3. | ECO Workshop on “Innovations in methodology through new technology in conducting population census” | 2022 | tbd | tbd |
| 4. | “ECO workshop on “Unemployment and Informal Sector Statistics” | 2022 | tbd | tbd |
|  |  **Economic Research** |  |  |  |
| 5. | 7th Meeting of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (EPCSER)  | 2022 | tbd | tbd |
| 6. | 6th Meeting of the ECO Editorial Board  | 2022 | tbd | tbc |
| 7. | 3rd Meeting (preparatory) on the ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum and 3rd ECO Economic Forum  | 2021/2022 | tbd | tbd |
|  | **Non-ECO Events** |  |  |  |
| 1. | Joint ECO-SIAP e-Learning on statistics | 2022/23 | tbd | tbd |
| 2. | ECO Workshop on “COVID-19 Statistics in the Member States” | 2022/23 | tbd | tbd |
| 3. | Joint ECO-FAO online workshop on “Country Stat development via ECOSTAT links” | 2022/23 | tbd | tbd |
| 4. | ECO Training Course on “Strengthening of Vital Statistics and Registration in the Member States” | 2022/23 | tbd | tbd |