

**32nd Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC)**

**Working Paper on ECO’s International Relations & ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions & Affiliated Bodies**

Prepared by the ECO Secretariat

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1. **Executive Summary**

In the face of COVID-19, the regional organizations and sub-regional groupings have a crucial role to play for bringing swift socio-economic recovery. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) as a regional organization has a potential to advance its role in the revival and advancement of regional economies. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) as a regional organization has a potential to advance its role in the revival and advancement of regional economies. The evolving regional and international economic situation, ECO Member States face considerable challenges that have bearing on their development goals. In line with regional priorities and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on 28 November, 2021 assessed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of the region and provided a strategic direction and a way forward under the “**Ashgabat Consensus for Action**” for achieving the Member States’ common objectives and prosperity in the ECO region.

2. ECO represents a unique intergovernmental platform that brings together countries from Central Asia, Caucuses, South and West Asia. Because of its diverse membership, location and the potential to contribute to the economic growth of the member countries, ECO is drawing renewed interest of the regional and global partners for jointly addressing the socio-economic development needs of the region. In our efforts to achieve the socio-economic objectives, the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations have been our main partners. The ECO enjoys observer status at General Assembly and participates in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in this capacity. The biennial resolution on UN-ECO Cooperation adopted by the General Assembly on 9 September 2021 provides the mandate and basis for deepening the existing cooperation with the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations for the purpose of accelerating regional integration and ensuring regional sustainable development aimed at enhancing prosperity of the member countries. During the 15th ECO Summit, ECO and UNESCAP have signed Memorandum of Understanding for further institutionalizing the existing cooperative relations between the two organizations.

3. Apart from its cooperative relations with the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, the ECO also maintains contacts with other regional and international organizations for supporting the development activities in the areas of common interest. ECO Secretariat is continuing efforts of exploring possibilities of further enhancing cooperation and support from such regional and international organizations including Islamic Development Bank (IDB), European Union (EU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Turkic Council etc. for various ECO programmes and projects. These enhanced ties would immensely benefit the cause of regional integration for the member states, leading this region to the path of socio-economic development.

1. **ECO’s External Relations**

1. Enhancement of external relations and cooperation with the UN system are among ECO’s top priority. ECO sustained its efforts in developing and promoting long-term and mutually beneficial relations with a host of regional and international partners to realize its goals and objectives. The guidance in this regard is derived from the Treaty of Izmir, decisions of the Summits/CoM, the Comprehensive Plan of Action to enhance ECO’s External Relations and other ECO vital documents including ECO Vision 2025.

2. ECO, in collaboration with the various UN Agencies is making efforts to promote the cause of socio-economic development in the region. ECO has assumed observer status with the United Nations and its different agencies/entities/conventions, notably UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), UNCTAD, the World Trade Organization, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the Islamic Development Bank. Most recently, ECO has assumed the reciprocal Observer Status with the International Energy Charter.

**Status of ECO’s External Relations**

**UN System**

3. It is a matter of immense satisfaction and encouragement that ECO is gaining more visibility at international level. In continuation of the past efforts for strengthening and expanding ECO’s cooperative relations with the UN system, steady endeavor has also been made in the reported period in a range of collaborative activities. ECO’s relations with the United Nations, its Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes including United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for dAsia and Pacific (UNESCAP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Economic Commission on Europe (UNECE), United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Office of High Representative for Least Developed Countries), Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Children Fund and United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and others have been growing steadily.

4. The efforts by the ECO Secretariat have been aimed at securing financial and technical support of relevant partners for the implementation of ECO’s programmes and activities. The Secretariat has maintained contacts with the UN for promoting and furtherance of the set out objectives of the Organization. Accordingly, meetings were also held with officials of organizations within the UN system to secure support and assistance for the ECO activities and programmes.

5. ECO has been regularly participating in the United Nations’ General Assembly’s annual sessions as observer. Meetings with UN Specialized Agencies and other relevant international and regional organizations on the sidelines of the United Nations’ General Assembly’s annual sessions provide an appropriate rather excellent occasion for the enhancement of ECO’s external relations. Last year, however, due to COVID-19 the organization did not send its relevant mission to the UN General Assembly’s annual session. Despite all constraints, regular advancement has been made on various avenues. It is a matter of immense satisfaction that on 9 September 2021, the UN General Assembly passed the biennial Resolution on UN-ECO Cooperation paving the way for further enhancing cooperation between the UN Agencies and the ECO.

6. The support of the UN Specialized Agencies and other partners is very vital or the realization of these ECO’s goals. A number of joint programmes/projects are being implemented with the support of our partners. Cooperation with UNESCAP has also witnessed further growth. For instance, in the field of cargo mobilization, the ECO-ESCAP-IDB joint project on operationalization of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) railway is operating smoothly. The former ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, participated in the 77th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held virtually on 28 April 2021. The theme for the session was “building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific”.

7. On the invitation of the UN’s Undersecretary General and Executive Secretary of the ESCAP, the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri virtually attended the ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week organized from August 23-28, 2021. Recently in November 2021 on the occasion of 15th ECO Summit, ECO and ESCAP have finalized and signed the revised MoU in order to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in the priority areas.

7. The ECO also maintained cooperative relations with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization ([UNIDO](http://www.unido.org/)) in promoting the Joint ECO-UNIDO Project of establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre and launching of the Preparatory Phase of this Project. The UNIDO also participated in the 4th ECO Energy Ministerial Meeting which was held virtually on 24 June 2021. The Meeting approved the Charter on Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre.

8. Similarly, ECO’s relations with FAO, UNECE, UNCTAD, UNOSSC and UNODC are gradually strengthening. ECO and Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCC) organized a virtual introductory training on “Project Cycle Management (PCM)” in cooperation with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on 16-17 March 2021. The main purpose of the training was to improve basics and tools of PCM which are essential for developing and implementing projects. The training also aimed to improve capacities to support implementation of the new ECO Regional Programme for Food Security. In particular, it is designed to support the development of projects to alleviate food insecurity in the ECO region. On the invitation of the UNOSSC, the ECO Secretariat participated in the meeting organized on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region as part of the commemoration of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting was held virtually on September 14, 2021.

**Regional/International Organizations**

9. The enhanced ties with international and regional organizations immensely benefit the cause of regional economic development leading this region to the path of prosperity. The Secretariat intends to develop cooperative relations with major international and regional organizations in line with the Izmir Treaty, the basic document of the organization. During the period under review, ECO maintained its relations with important Regional and International Organizations and the Secretariat was represented by the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary Generals of ECO in the relevant meetings of those organizations.

10. Given the significance of the inter-regional cooperation, the Secretariat has endeavoured to promote meaningful interaction with other regional/sub-regional organizations. On the invitation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the former Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour participated in the 2nd OIC Summit on Science and Technology. The Summit was held virtually on 16 June 2021 to review the implementation of OIC STI Agenda 2026. In his message to H.E. Dr. Soleimanpour, the OIC Secretary General, H.E Dr. Yousef A. A. Al-Othaimeen thanked the ECO Secretary General for his participation in the 2nd OIC Summit on Science and Technology. The OIC Secretary General underlined the importance that the OIC attached to the ECO as a brotherly organization and expressed his desire for further close cooperation between the two organizations for benefit of the common Member States.

11. In accordance with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Council, ECO has revived the contacts with ASEAN to give fresh impetus to ECO-ASEAN cooperation. With a view to revitalizing and enriching relationship with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Secretary General of the ECO, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri participated in the 20th Jubilee Summit of the Council of Heads of State/Government of the SCO held on September 17, 2021 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

12. During the reported period, ECO enhanced its collaboration with the International Energy Charter – with which it enjoys reciprocal Observer Status – in promoting the Project on establishment ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM). ECO-REM was identified as an area for possible ECO-Energy Charter cooperation and is expected to be implemented through joint consortium. The International Energy Charter participated in the 4th ECO Energy Ministerial Meeting which was held virtually on 24 June 2021. The Meeting approved the Charter on Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre and the roadmap for realization of ECO Regional Electricity Market Project. During the meeting Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General of ECO, highlighted the financial and technical support of international partners including International Energy Charter for successful completion of the ECO-REM Project.

**List of MoUs/Agreements between ECO and other Regional and International Organizations**

In order to develop meaningful cooperative relations with international and regional organizations, ECO has signed 50 MoUs and Agreements with the UN system as well as other regional and international organizations. The list of key MoUs/Agreement is given below:

1. MoU between ECO and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Istanbul, 7th July, 1993.
2. MoU between ECO and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Istanbul. 7th July, 1993.
3. MoU on Cooperation between ECO and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Tehran, 25th January, 1994.
4. Relationship Agreement between ECO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Tehran, 25th January, 1994.
5. MoU between ECO and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), New York, 30th September, 1994.
6. MoU between ECO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), New York, 4th October, 1994.
7. MoU between ECO and United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP), Islamabad, 15th March, 1995.
8. MoU between ECO and United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Islamabad, 15th March, 1995.
9. MoU between ECO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) 8th December, 1997.
10. MoU between International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Aleppo, Syria, 8th June, 1999.
11. MoU between ECO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 23rd November, 1999.
12. MoU between ECO and the International Union of Railways (UIC), Tehran, 31st January, 2001.
13. MoU between ECO Secretariat and the International Trade Center UNCTAD/WTO, 8th March, 2001.
14. MoU between ECO and the Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD), Warsaw, 17th March, 2001.
15. MoU between ECO and the World Custom Organization (WCO), Brussels, 17th March, 2003.
16. MoU between ECO and the Colombo Plan (1 Version), 13th May, 2003 (Joint Communiqué of 24th November, 2009, signed in Tehran, is attached to this document).
17. MoU between ECO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), 24th June, 2004.
18. MoU between ECO and UNEP, Tehran, 18th August, 2004.
19. MoU between ECO and WMO, Geneva, 10th December, 2004.
20. MoU between ECO Secretariat and the Secretariat of ASEAN, 18th January 2006.
21. MoU between ECO and the UN International Strategy for Disasters Relief (ISDR) Tehran, 9th May, 2007.
22. MoU between ECO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Ashgabat, 11th December, 2007.
23. MoU between ECO and International Road Transport Union, Istanbul, 15th May, 2008.
24. MoU between ECO and the Conference of Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Almaty, 25th August, 2008.
25. MoU between ECO and the Universal Postal Union (UPU), Bern & Tehran, 20th November, 2008
26. Technical Assistance Agreement (Grant) between ECO and the Islamic Development Bank, 7th January, 2009.
27. MoU between ECO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 27th January, 2009.
28. MoU between ECO and the and The European Commission (EC) on Implementation of EC-financed project under the Instrument For Stability on “Fight Against Illicit Drug Trafficking from/to Afghanistan” with ECO Member States, Tehran, 3rd February, 2009.
29. MoU among ECO, ESCAP and the Islamic Development Bank on Transport Development Bangkok & Tehran, 9th March, 2009.
30. MoU between ECO and Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), Istanbul, 9th June, 2009.
31. MoU between ECO and the Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission (TRACECA)), Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan, 16th June, 2009.
32. MoU among Economic Cooperation Organization, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on Transport Development on 9 March 2009 (signed through an exchange of letters in March 2009, as per article XI (b) this MOU was renewed in 2012 and expired in March 2015 ).
33. Protocol between ECO and Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) on reconstruction, 5th August, 2010, at Tehran.
34. MoU between ECO and International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), 30 August, 2010.
35. MoU among Economic Cooperation Organization, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Concerning Transport Development in Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Region, 30 March 2011.
36. MoU between ECO and D8, 6 October 2011.
37. MoU between ECO and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States signed on 23 September 2014.
38. Agreement between ECO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (contribution of ECO to provide support to the “Seed Sector Development in Countries of the ECO” (Project)) Signed through an exchange of letters in May 2015).
39. MoU between ECO and UNOSS, signed: September 2017.
40. MoU between ECO and SESRIC signed on 16 January 2018 at the ECO Secretariat.
41. MoU between ECO and WIPO concluded between the Parties on 22 January 2018.
42. MoU between ECO and TEPAV signed in Ankara on 12 February 2018.
43. Revised MoU between ECO and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2021.
44. **New and Ongoing Proposals**
45. Extending Observer-ship in the ECO

Enhancement of close cooperative relations with regional and international organizations is considered an effective tool of ECO. ECO has been engaged in developing and promoting mutually beneficial relations with a host of international partners in a focused and sustained manner for supporting the development activities in the areas of common interest.

One of the means to engage the regional/international organizations and relevant member states in our activities is granting observer status to them. The Observer may be granted based on the following criteria:

a). Commitment to regional and international economic cooperation.

b). Commitment to promote socio-economic development in the ECO region.

c). Commitment to respect Treaty of Izmir and other ECO‟s Basic documents

d). Harmony with the principles of ECO cooperation.

e). Potential to contribute to ECO‟s goals and objectives.

In view of the directives of the various decision-making bodies of the Organization, observer status in the ECO has been granted to the following three states/organizations aimed at developing meaningful cooperative relations:

1. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)
2. International Energy Charter (IEC)
3. Turkic Council (TC)

Recently, various international organizations and some of the countries have shown their interests to acquire observer status in the ECO. The Council may discuss the matter and make its recommendations for the relevant decision making bodies of the ECO as per the “Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

1. Meeting of Heads of Broadcasting (television and radio) Organizations

The ECO Secretariat stronglybelieves that efforts aimed at the promotion of common regional identities will also help in achieving the other goals which were envisaged by the founders of the ECO as the development of regional economic and trade relations is closely linked to cultural, literature arts, poetry, education and sports relations and sense of belonging to each other. Based on the guidelines of our leadership, ECO Secretariat has introduced a great deal of such activities in our programmes. For instance, regional cooperation in tourism is one of the strategic objectives of ECO Vision 2025.

2. ECO has already realized the significance of digitalization and mass media. Consequently, having recommendation of the 31st RPC, ECO had planned a first meeting of heads of broadcasting organizations in 2021 but unfortunately it could not be organized due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions. In the aftermath of the COVID-19, a major theme that has emerged during the pandemic is the digital transition. As billions of people around the world are confined to their homes, digital platforms for music, books, films, performances and museums have grown significantly. In this background the proposed meeting has gathered more significant and may outline digital initiatives in the region, including those oriented towards arts education, providing quality cultural materials online, and working with art schools to ensure continued studies through digital means. The meeting may also workout intra-regional cultural exchanges through the medium of film.

3. At the same time, the core of ECO Vision 2025 is securing our common regional identity. The bonds of affinity must be strengthened, our historical linkages must be cherished, our cultural grandeur must be guarded, and our shared customs, art, and culture must be prized. In this regard, one of the key areas which is lacking in our agenda is establishment of cooperation among broadcasting (television and radio) organizations of the region. The Council may deliberate on the proposal and make necessary recommendations.

1. Networking of Scientific Organizations/Associations.

The importance of sciences and technology for sustainable development is well established. Although a number of useful measures have been pursued by the ECOSF for achieving the basic goals outlined in its Charter, the present scope of the ECOSF is inadequate due to its limited member states. Keeping in view speedy development in the field of sciences and technology at international level, the Secretariat is of the view that enhanced cooperation in this area is essentially required to catch the present world. Accordingly, the Secretariat would like to initiate some fresh and comparable activities in its agenda for 2022. Accordingly, the Secretariat proposes building institutional linkages in the field of science and technology. In this regard, networking of scientific organizations/associations of all ten ECO Member States may be established to promote regional cooperation as well as meet the requirements of the emerging trends in science and technology.

2. The Council may deliberate on the issue and endorse the establishment of the aforementioned networking of scientific organizations/associations.

1. Re-activation of ECO College of Insurance (ECOI)

ECO College of Insurance (ECOI), affiliated body of the ECO, was established in 1991 by reviving the former RCD International School of Insurance. The college is under the supervision of Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The statute of the college was and was approved by the ECO CoM in 2007 in Herat, Afghanistan. In the statute a number of purposes are taken into consideration, such as training expert human resources for the insurance industry of Iran and other ECO Member States, providing an environment suitable and equipped enough for doing research studies required in the insurance industry and their techniques. Besides, with a view of rapid growth in the insurance industry as a result of its being one of the most outstanding means of various economic activities, the need for specialized and educated experts in the field of insurance industry is more evident. Moreover, considering the fact that the field of “Regional studies: Central Asia and Caucasus” at Master’s level has been restored once again, and there is an urgent need to do research in this field, ECO College of Insurance has turned into a unique experience in the region.

2. Regarding the college, three matters may be considered by the Council:

1. As mentioned above, the college being an academic institute offers scholarships to ECO member states for relevant studies at bachelors and masters level. Most of the scholarships lapsed due to lack of interests from the member states. The council may encourage the member states to actively participate in the activities of the college.
2. The Council, based on the mechanism for cooperation between ECO-CoI and ECO-EI agreed during the 31st RPC, may propose joint activities of ECO-CoI and ECO-EI for the year 2022
3. In order to make it active and real regional institute, the Council may encourage the concerned member states to nominate their relevant experts/senior academicians to constitute the board of trustees of the college as per the approved statue.
4. Training workshop for foreign services officers from ECO Member States

On the proposal of the ECO Secretariat, I.R. of Pakistan has offered to arrange a training workshop in 2021 at Foreign Service Academy of Pakistan for foreign services officers from ECO Member States. However due to ongoing COVID situation, the course could not be held. Now the Council may make fresh recommendation about the possibility of arranging this training course.

1. **ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions & Affiliated Bodies**

The establishment of the specialized agencies, regional institutions, regional centres and affiliated bodies – the intergovernmental sub-organizations of the ECO – is a manifestation of ECO’s commitment for supporting the organization’s broad objectives enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir. These objectives are aimed at promoting socio-economic development of the Member States mainly by developing and expanding cooperation in the relevant areas.

2. Over the years, the member states have established a number of specialized agencies, regional institutions and other ECO bodies in different fields of cooperation such as science, education, culture, trade, banking, agriculture, environment, economic research etc. Presently, the number of such bodies stands at over 20. These bodies are located in the member states, mainly in Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. While most of these bodies have already been established and are operational, others are in the process of being established.

3. The broad objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir are achieved through multiple institutional frameworks like the specialized agencies, regional institutions and affiliated bodies by providing them support in fostering and promoting cooperation in the relevant areas. The specialized agencies of the ECO include: the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) based in Tehran, Iran; the ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) based in Islamabad, Pakistan and the ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI) based in Ankara, Turkey.

4. Similarly, there exist a number of regional institutions within the framework of ECO that include: ECO Consultancy & Engineering Company (ECO-CEC) based in Lahore, Pakistan; ECO Research Center (ERC) based in Baku, Azerbaijan; ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) with its rotating headquarters currently in Karachi, Pakistan; ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) in Istanbul, Turkey and the ECO Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM) with its headquarters in Tehran, Iran. Besides, ECO’s affiliated bodies consist of: the ECO College of Insurance based in Tehran, Iran; Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries (PAECO) with its permanent secretariat based in Islamabad, Pakistan; the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) based in Ankara, Turkey and the ECO Postal Staff College based in Islamabad, Pakistan.

4. A degree of variation exists in the membership and structures of these ECO affiliated bodies. Despite being associated with ECO and lying within its broad framework, these bodies are totally independent in their functioning. The financial and administrative policies of these bodies are independent of those of the ECO Secretariat. The ECO Secretariat is represented in the boards of trustees of some of the specialized agencies in line with their respective charters/statutes.

5. Article-X of the Treaty of Izmir envisages the establishment of the Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions in specific fields of cooperation. It also mentions that the number, nature and objectives of these agencies and institutions may be determined by the Council of Ministers and revised as and when necessary.

6. As per the Treaty of Izmir, the Specialized Agencies are classified as the organs of the ECO that have been established by the decision of the Member States and have legal personality and autonomy in management to promote close cooperation among themselves in social, cultural, technical and scientific fields in coordination with the ECO Secretariat.

7. The Regional Institutions, according to the Treaty of Izmir, are defined as the economic, commercial and financial organs of the ECO having self-sustained budget, legal personality and autonomy in management and that have been established to promote economic growth of the ECO region through provision of financial and commercial facilities and investment of funds within the region.

8. As per the Modalities for the Establishment of Regional Centres and Specialized Units and Grant of Affiliation to Non-ECO Bodies and Organizations, the following definitions are presented:

* 1. Regional Centres: Any Specialized Institution, Agency, Body of the ECO, having its own Charter, Rules of Procedure and a well defined Sphere of Activity and Autonomy.
  2. Specialized Units: Unit established for a specific purpose to function within the Organizational Structure and under supervision of the Secretariat, for a specified period of time.
  3. Affiliated Bodies: Any Independent Public or Private Sector Organization, Institution, Agency or Body, having its own Governing document, Rules and Regulations, a well defined Sphere of Activity and Autonomy granted Affiliation by the ECO.

9. The activities of these ECO bodies are followed up by the ECO Secretariat for necessary coordination through a variety of channels. While the activities of the Specialized Agencies such as ECI, ECOEI and ECOSF are followed up by the International Relations Unit of the ECO, activities of other bodies having relevance with core sectoral working of ECO are followed up relevant Directorates (for instance, the Directorate of Trade and Investment coordinates with the ECO-TDB and ECO-CCI, whereas issues pertaining to ECOSA and RCRM are followed up by the Directorate of Agriculture, Industry and Tourism).

10. Recently, draft 'Modalities for the Establishment of Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and the Establishment of Specialized Unit at the ECO Secretariat and Grant of Affiliation' have been prepared by the Secretariat as part of the ECO reform process to address: the criteria for the establishment of the specialized agencies and regional institutions; the establishment of coordination mechanism amongst the Secretariats of the ECO bodies; and the proper classification of the bodies established by ECO.

11. The 242nd Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) has approved the establishment of Ad-hoc Committee to look into the modalities and the efficacy/performance of the specialized agencies, regional institutions and affiliated bodies. So far the Committee has organized four meetings with active participation of the member states. However, due to COVID-19 the process was halted temporarily and would be reactivated in 2022 in order to finalize the said documents.

**Recent activities of the ECO Specialized Agencies**

The reports of the three ECO Specialized Agencies, based on their recent activities, are given below:

1. **ECO Cultural Institute**

Background

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is the successor organization of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) which remained in existence since 1964 up to 1979. Following RCD's transformation into ECO, and its special role as a viable regional organization, bringing together the ten states of the region, with common culture and shared history located in one of the most strategic areas of the globe, the need for the revival of the former Cultural RCD was felt. Revival of the Cultural Institute was visualized in Article II of the Treaty of Izmir, with the objective;" To consolidate cultural affinities and spiritual and fraternal ties that bind the people of the Member States through social and cultural channels of thought and action". The formal endorsement of the revival of the Cultural Institute under its present name was finally manifested through the signing of its Charter at the Third ECO Summit Meeting held at Islamabad on 14-15 March 1995 and Tehran was selected as its Headquarters.

Since its inception, and in order to realize the goals and objectives set in its Charter, ECI has hosted series of literary and cultural functions, organized exhibitions of folk, traditional and modern arts, taken measures to promote regional cooperation through organizing major sports events, published materials in English and other major languages of the region on the common cultural heritage of its Member States to promote further understanding amongst its people, stimulate the interest of the people of the member countries towards the existing cultural, educational and social problems of the Region and disseminate information on the cultural events of the Region.

The latest status of the Institute’s membership is as follows:

* The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have signed the ECI Charter and ratified it.
* The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan have signed the ECI Charter but not ratified it to date.
* The Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan have not signed the Charter.

**Activities in 2021**

The Consultation Meeting of the ECO Specialized Agencies on "The Role of Culture, Education and Science and in Sustainable Development"(January 2021)

On the initiative of ECI, the Consultation Meeting of the ECO Specialized Agencies on "The Role of Culture, Education and Science and in Sustainable Development" was virtually held in January 2021. All three presidents of the Specialized Agencies, i.e., ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute, ECO Science Foundation, as well as the Deputy Secretary General for the International Relations Section and ECO Science Foundation President-designate participated in the meeting. At the meeting, proposal for joint activities were discussed. Also, the Presidents of the ECO Specialized Agencies agreed to convene such meetings regularly.

Participation in the First Virtual Tehran Int’l Book Fair (February 2021)

ECO Cultural Institute participated in the first virtual Tehran International Book Fair to familiarize the public with its books and publications. ECI has participated in many editions of the book fair in the past years which provides a great opportunity to raise public awareness on the culture and literature of the ECO region.

International Conference on Cultural Impact of Corona in Afghanistan (February 2021)

ECI and Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute of Iran held an international webinar on the cultural impact of Corona in Afghanistan. Present at the meeting were Director of Archaeology Institute of Afghanistan and Acting Director, Tourism Directorate, Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan, examined the impact of the corona on Afghanistan cultural heritage and tourism industry.

Commemoration of Amir Alisher Navoi (February 2021)

On the occasion of the 580th birth anniversary of Amir Alisher Navoi, the renowned poet and writer, ECI in partnership with the embassy of Uzbekistan in Tehran held an international webinar in February 2021, titled " Alisher Navoi's works as the cultural achievements of the ECO region". At the webinar, Ambassadors of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and prominent researchers and scholar of the ECO region discussed the personality characteristics and works of this great poet.

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Webinar: " The History of Painting in Afghanistan (February 2021)

ECI held a webinar on " The History of Painting in Afghanistan" in which scholars reviewed and discussed the relevant history from the ancient times to the present day.

First Joint Symposium of the Rectors of ECO Member-State Universities (March 2021)

The First Joint Symposium of the Rectors of ECO Member-State Universities was held virtually on 04 March 2021. It is considered a milestone in the partnership between the ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute, ECO science Foundation and Allameh Tabataba'i University. ECI made every effort and constantly followed up the issue with the invited university rectors to ensure that the webinar will be successfully organized. Thus, the Institute managed to attract participation of the major universities of all the ten ECO member states. The most important result of the meeting would be the establishment of a network connection among the universities of the region for conducting academic exchanges and joint projects.

“Nowruz, an Occasion for Solidarity” (March 2021)

ECO Cultural Institute held the celebration of “Nowruz, an Occasion for Solidarity” in March 2021 to mark the arrival of spring and to promote solidarity and friendship among the peoples of the ECO region. The event yielded a spectacular attendance; present at the meeting were President of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, Ambassadors of Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and a group of ambassadors and diplomats from other countries. The celebration was also well received by a great number of enthusiasts on social media.

Webinar on Kufic Inscriptions of Yazd and Herat (April 2021)

With the aim of recognizing the art of inscription in the ECO region, ECO Cultural Institute and Yazd University held a webinar on Kufic inscriptions in the cities of Yazd in Iran and Herat in Afghanistan. At the webinar, scholars and professors explored the characteristics of Kufic inscriptions in the historical monuments of the previously mentioned cities.

ECI, Saadi Foundation Organized Inti. Webinar on Persian Language (May 2021)

Also, on the occasion of Persian Language Day and Ferdowsi Commemoration Day in Iran and aiming at promotion of common languages in the ECO region, ECI in association with Saadi Foundation held a webinar on May 15, 2021. At the webinar scholars from almost all the ECO Member States including: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan made speeches on the status of Persian language in their respective countries. Also, ambassadors of Afghanistan and Tajikistan graced the event with their statements.

Online launching for the Latest Books on Pakistan’s Literature (May 2021)

ECI held an online book launch on Monday, May 17, 2021 for three books written by Pakistani authors. The books included:

1. A complete handbook of Urdu language and grammar for Persian speakers) written by the late Dr. Shahid Choudhary with a foreword by the honorable Ambassador of Pakistan in Iran, which has been republished by ECI because it is much in demand as a reference for university students and researchers.
2. A collection of Minimal Stories under the title “Word Tree” written by Mubasher Ali Zaidi and translated into Persian by the Pakistani poet, Ahmad Shahriar; and
3. A Persian poetry collection titled “Pirhan Gom Karde’am”, by the same Pakistani poet, Ahmad Shahriyar.

The event was attended by the representatives of the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran, writers, researchers and university professors.

ECI Marked 110th Birthday Anniversary of Mirzo Tursunzoda (May 2021)

On the occasion of the 110th birth anniversary of Mirzo Tursunzoda, people's poet and national hero of Tajikistan, an international webinar in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Tehran, titled "Poet of Peace and Friendship" was held on Thursday 20 May 2021. At the webinar, President of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature of Iran, Ambassador of Tajikistan in Iran, prominent researchers and scholar and celebrated poets and authors of the ECO region discussed the personality characteristics and works of this great poet.

The 5th meeting of ECO Heads of National Libraries (June 2021)

The 5th meeting of ECO Heads of National Libraries was held online on 15 June 2021. Although the meeting had postponed two times and it was really difficult to bring together all the ECO member states for the third time, with continuous efforts and follow-up by ECI, delegations of all the member states took part in the meeting. Also, ECI took the initiative and upon the Institute's proposal, the meeting was held virtually for the first time. The purpose of this meeting was to exchange views on common issues of the National Libraries of the member countries and to create a new chapter in cooperation in the field of cultural interactions at the regional level and to share experiences during the Covid-19 epidemic.

The meeting was organized in cooperation with Iran’s National Library as the host. The event was participated by authorities of most of the ECO member states as well as President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and Acting Representative of UNESCO Cluster Office.

ECI’s Full Support for Iranian Female Mountaineer (June 2021)

ECI has supported Ms. Rashin Jahanbani, an Iranian female mountaineer to climb Somoni peak as the first woman from ECO region who climbs the highest peaks of Tajikistan to be a messenger of friendship between nations. Now the flag of ECO Cultural Institute is flying on top of the Peak.

Commemoration of Prof. Habibi, the famous Afghan writer (July 2021)

ECI organized an international seminar to honor Prof. Abdul Hai Habibi, the famous Afghan writer, editor, historian and researchers. The meeting was attended by prominent scholars from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and some western orientalist from Oxford University as well as representatives of the embassies of the ECO member states who discussed thoughts and works of this prominent personality.

**Int’l Conference on the Recognition of Avicenna Heritage (August 2021)**

To mark the birth anniversary of Abu Ali Sina and to recognize the scientific position of this eminent personality, an international conference titled "A Review of Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna) Thought and Knowledge" be held virtually by ECO Cultural Institute in cooperation with Allame Tabataba'i University. At the webinar eminent scholars from Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan delivered speeches on the origins of Abu Ali Sina's thoughts and philosophical foundations, his works and position in medical history and his role in science and philosophy.

**The second exhibition of “Nakh-o Negareh” (September 2021)**

To preserve and promote handicrafts in ECO Region, ECI in partnership with Hima Art Group organized the second exhibition of “Nakh-o Negareh” (Thread and Pattern). The event aimed to identify artists and doyens of traditional arts of ECO member countries to promote and disseminate the knowledge, techniques and skills of traditional arts and the transfer methods to the generations to come. In this regard, ECI staff made great efforts to collect artworks and handicrafts from across the ECO region.

**ECI Marks International Day of Peace (September 2021)**

On September 19, 2021, ECO Cultural Institute held a ceremony with the participation of diplomats from Tajikistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Romania, Turkey, Philippines, Slovakia, Mexico and guests from ICOM Iran, Islamic Culture and Communication Organization (ICCO) and a group of local and foreign artists to mark the International Day of Peace. During the event, the book "Arman-e Solh" (Apiration for Peace) was launched and the exhibition of Arman-e Solh featuring artworks on theme of peace was opened in the art gallery of ECO Cultural Institute.

**ECO Cultural Institute Hosted Afghan Poets (September 2021)**

In September 2021, the ECO Cultural Institute hosted a group of Afghan poets, and writers residing in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The cultural experts of the Institute held a cordial meeting with Afghan poets and writers residing in Iran to discuss possible programs related to the history of Afghan culture and literature.

**Basic Persian Learning Course for Diplomats (October 2021)**

To make arrangements for the teaching of the languages of the Region which is among the key objectives of the Institute ECI in partnership with Saadi Foundation has hold an online Persian learning course for the members of diplomatic corps. It is a starter course and is gratis. ECO Cultural Institute plans to hold similar courses for the other common languages in the ECO region.

**ECI contributions to a variety of cultural programs across the ECO region**

Apart from the aforementioned activities, ECI has contributed to and participated in a variety of programs including: online conference on the Creativity of Kamoliddin Behzod in the cross­section of artistic culture of the East and West” organized by the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan, the international Congress "Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan - the Foundation of a New Renaissance", organized by the World Society for the Study, Preservation and Popularization of the Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan, international online conference on "Cultural Dialogue, Peace and Development on the Silk Road", organized by the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft, Municipality of Mashhad and some other cultural authorities, Commemoration of the eminent Tajik Poet, Loiq Sherali, held by India-lran Group and participated by scholars from India, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan to mark his 80th birth anniversary; an online conference titled “Embracing the momentum of Nature as Intangible Heritage; revisiting the seasonal rituals in the ancient civilization of Asia”, the opening ceremony of the first "Culture Garden" of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, the International Cultural Forum “Central Asia at the crossroads of Civilizations” held in Khiva, Uzbekistan and organized in collaboration with UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Sector, The commemoration of the late Afghan poet, writer and cultural activist Mohammad Sarvar Rajaei.

**Enhancing publicity of ECO Cultural Institute**

To elevate publicity of ECO Cultural Institute and to enhance visibility of cultural programs of the ECO member states, ECI has started publishing the latest daily cultural and social news of the ECO member states on its website and social networks which will enhance the public awareness throughout the ECO region. Also, we have released a print news bulletin containing a selection of the news of the ECO member states which is circulated among the embassies of the ECO member states regularly.

**Publications:**

Books:

* "Life and Works of Kamal Khujandi", written by Dr. Badriddin Maghsudzoda, transliterated by Shah Mansour Shah Mirzo.
* "Forty Lessons from Kamal", by Suraya Hassan Sultan, is a collection of 40 fivesomes by the author on Kamal Khujandi's poetry.
* "Madarnameh" by Shah Mansour Shah Mirzo is a collection of poems on the theme of mother by poets from across the ECO region
* “Archeology of the Iron Age, Early Civilizations of Afghanistan” by the late Professor Mohammad Rasool Bawari.
* "World Intangible Heritage in the ECO Region" which is the collection of intangible heritage of all the ten member states inscribed in UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

- "A complete handbook of Urdu language and grammar for Persian speakers” written by the late Dr. Shahid Choudhary with a foreword by the honorable Ambassador of Pakistan in Iran, republished by ECI because it is much in demand as a reference for university students and researchers (first published in 2000).

* “Word Tree”, a collection of Minimal Stories under the title written by Mubasher Ali Zaidi and translated into Persian by the Pakistani poet, Ahmad Shahriar.
* "I Begin with You (Selection of Modern Poetry of Iran)", compiled and translated into English by Iranian scholar and translator, Dr. Nastaran Nosratzadegan. The dual-language anthology comprises a collection of poems from the 50 most influential Iranian poets from Nima Yushij to date.

**Books published in partnership with other publications:**

* “Stories of Rostam Pahlavan” (11 volume set), authored by Dr. Fereydoun Joneidi the collection provides both Cyrillic and Persian scripts and is a readable volume for the youth and young adults.
* ‘Letter & Letter Writing in Shahnameh, written by the late Dr. Joreh Beyk Nazari and Dr. Ali Mohammadi Khorasani
* ‘Yar Mi-Ayad’ (Here Comes the Beloved) is a collection of poems by Kutbi Kirom, Peoples’ Poet of Tajikistan and laureate of the Rudaki State Award

**Journals:**

ECO Heritage (ISSN 2008-546X, English Language)

Culinary Tourism in the ECO Region

The 24th issue of the English-language quarterly magazine 'ECO Heritage' focuses on the traditional foods of the ECO Region.

Isfahan Special Issue

To promote cultural tourismin the ECO region, EC1 has started a project to introduce cultural tourism attractions of the major cities of the ECO region. In this regard, a special issue of ECO Heritage was dedicated to Isfahan city, a top tourist destination which has joined UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a creative city of handicrafts and folk arts.

Ancient Rock Art in the ECO Region

The 26th issue of the quarterly magazine 'ECO Heritage' deals with the ancient inscriptions and paintings on the rocks in the ECO member states.

Nowruz Special Issue

On the auspicious occasion of Nowruz, ECI published a special issue dedicated to Nowruz traditions in the ECO member states.

Dushanbe Special Issue

At the proposal of the Government and the Embassy of Tajikistan, ECI dedicated a special issue of itsquarterly journal, ECO Heritage, to Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan. Dushanbe has been declared as the tourist capital of the ECO region in 2020-2021.

**Newsletter:**

The first issue of ECI News Letter titled "ECI Newsletter” was published in English and Persian languages on November 14, 2020. ECI has published 6 issues of the newsletter to date. The Newsletter contains historical, cultural, social, literary, sports and art news of the ECO member states as well as ECO Cultural Institute. The Newsletter intends to illustrate a bright, promising image of the cultural events of the ECO member countries and deliver the message of cultural diplomacy of the region to the diplomatic officials, ministries, universities and academic, educational, cultural and tourist centers, museums and libraries of the ten ECO countries as well as other international organizations.

**Memorandums of Understanding:**

* MoU with Shahid Beheshti University for organizing joint academic conferences, workshops, seminars and research projects
* MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and Roudaki Foundation for organizing concerts of the greatest pieces of music of the ECO countries, holding art training courses, facilitating the presence of art groups and artists from ECO member countries in Iran and vice versa
* MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and Niavaran Cultural Center for organizing joint cultural activities in the fields of poetry and literature, music, drama, visual arts, film and arts and crafts
* MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO). This MoU will provide ECI with the contribution of the ICRO in its activities for the ECO member states throughout the ECO region. The Organization is the Iranian authority which supports cultural exchange programs with other countries.
* MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and Sepahan Sports Club of Isfahan city for joint cooperation between the Sepahan club and ECI and the other sports clubs of the ECO member states to promote sports in the ECO region
* MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and Jundi-shapur University located in Dezful city. The MoU will enhance the joint cooperation between the universities of the ECO member states
* MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and Chiamod Art Institute. Clothing traditions are among key elements of cultural heritage of the ECO Region. To preserve such traditions and to promote fashion and clothing events, ECI has inked the MoU.

- MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and the authorities in charge of the ECO Park to make the necessary arrangements for holding programs or events by the esteemed member states. The park was officially opened in November 2013 in Tehran, on the sidelines of the 21st meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (CoM). The park is part of a grand cultural center located in Abbas Abad Hills, a large north-central neighborhood of Tehran. The proposal to build ECO-Park was approved at the 3rd ECI Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2007. The ECO Park was constructed by the Iranian Abbas Abad Renovation Company, an affiliate of Tehran Municipality.

- MoU between ECO Cultural Institute and BOOK.BAL Institute of IT Solutions to foster book reading culture and identify and introduce prominent authors of the ECO region and their works through an advanced web portal which collects information from diverse sources.

**ii. ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)**

**Introduction**

The ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)is a specialized agency of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Establishment of the Science Foundation was envisaged in the “Treaty of Izmir”, the Charter of ECO. The Charter of ECOSF was signed in Islamabad in March 1995 by all the 10 member states of ECO; Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. However, Additional Protocol to the Charter was approved by the ECO Council of Ministers in its 17th meeting held at Herat- Afghanistan in 2007. Subsequently the Foundation was established in Islamabad, Pakistan on 20 December 2011, with holding of the 1st meeting of its Board of Trustees (BoT), the highest decision making body.

The Foundation is playing an active role in engaging key stakeholders and partners to bring meaningful impact in the economic development through scientific and technological ventures among its Member States. It serves as a platform to promote Science and Technology Policy & Research as well as the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education through the implementation of Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) pedagogy with an end goal to strengthen the science base of future generations. ECOSF undertakes a number of programmes and initiatives to augment STI activities with the help of strategic partners to boost regional cooperation, socio-economic potential and cultural integration through science education and literacy in the region in line with ECO Vision 2025 and the UN SDGs.

ECOSF pursues the goal of promoting research and technological development for sustainable development and economic growth in the ECO region through the following key objectives:

* Development of **Human Resource** Capacity in Science, Technology and Innovation as well as science education in the ECO region
* Strengthening **Institutional Capacity** in scientific research and technological development among its member state
* Scientific, Technological and Research **Collaboration and Cooperation** among its member states and the vibrant STI ecosystem in the world.
* **Exchange/ dissemination** of Information on Scientific and Technological Research and Development through workshops, conferences and meetings etc.

The progress of ECOSF activities undertaken during 2020-2021 is briefly highlighted as under.

**A. Administrative**

1. **Signing of Host Country Agreement:** In line with the decision of 1st Meeting of ECOSF BoT, the Host Country Agreement initially drafted by ECOSF has gone through various steps of vetting and evaluation by the ECO Secretariat and different Ministries of the Government of Pakistan. Lately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan has redrafted the Agreement and sent to the Ministry of Science and Technology of Pakistan for their review and finalization.

It is pertinent to mention that joining of the new President of ECOSF- an Iranian National is contingent upon the Host Country Agreement between ECOSF and the Government of Pakistan; thus, signing of the Agreement is vital for administrative clarity on diplomatic privileges and immunities as per international diplomatic norms.

ECOSF requests the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan for signing of the Host Country Agreement at the earliest.

1. **Ratification Process:** The ratification of the ECOSF Charter and its Additional Protocol has so far been done by fine member states; Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Other members are being pursued in line with the decisions of ECOSF BoT and ECO COM; whereby the non-ratifying Member States have been requested to ratify the ECOSF Charter and its Additional Protocol.

ECOSF renews its requests to non-ratifying Member States, viz., Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan to expedite the process of ratification of the ECOSF Charter and its Additional Protocol.

1. **Nominations of Focal Points**: Seven Member Countries i.e., Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyzistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey, have nominated their Focal Points (FPs) and the nominations from other three member states (Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan) are still awaited. However, not all the FPs respond to ECOSF’s communications. Thus, ECOSF renews the request to its member states for their nominations of active Focal Points for ECOSF from relevant organizations/institutes mandated for science and technology for effective communication.
2. **Nominations for Executive Committee**: The nominations of Eminent Scientists for Executive Committee (EC) of ECOSF had been received from Seven Member States i.e., Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Other Member States i.e., Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey are still awaited, though being pursued consistently.
3. **Appointment of Next President of ECOSF:** The Nomination of Prof. Seyed Komail Tayebi of Iran had been approved by the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) during its 24th Meeting held on 9 November 2019 at Antalya – Republic of Turkey. Subsequently, the Government of I.R. of Iran completed their procedures for the joining Prof. Tayebi and issued diplomatic passports to him and his family; and has requested the Government of I.R. of Pakistan to make necessary arrangements for his joining.

Government of Pakistan is requested to make necessary arrangement to facilitate the joining of the New President at the earliest.

1. **Appointment of Executive Director ECOSF:** As per the decision of ECOSF BoT taken during its 4th Meeting held on 9 July 2019 at Isfahan – Iran, if Iran assumes Presidency of the ECOSF, Pakistan would assume the post of Executive Director (Para 61 if the report of BoT refers). Since the nominee of Iran for ECOSF Presidency has been approved; once the new President joins, Pakistan would have to nominate an eminent scientist for the position of Executive Director of the Foundation.
2. **6th Meeting of EC of ECOSF on 21 April 2021**: The 6th Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) of ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) was held virtually (online) on April 21, 2021. The Meeting was chaired by President ECOSF Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro and attended by the Representatives of the Member States namely; the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The ECO Secretariat was represented by the Head of Section for International Relations.

**B. Financial Status:**

**Budgetary Contributions by Member States:** So far, only two ratifying Member States; viz., Pakistan and Iran have been contributing the mandatory share of budget of the Foundation. Pakistan has been contributing consistently and paid budget contribution for the years 2012-2017; however from 2018 onward, Pakistan is contributing around 75% of its Mandatory Contribution because of undervalued currency exchange rate. While the I. R. of Iran has paid for the year 2012 and partial for the years 2013, 2017 & 2018 as support to ECOSF events in Iran. However, I.R. of Iran has not made any contribution since 2019. Other three ratifying members viz., Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have not made any budget contribution so far.

Owing to non-payment of mandatory contribution by concerned Member States, ECOSF has been compelled to scale down its core activities and appointed less that 50% staff. Yet the Foundation finds it extremely challenging to manage its day to day administrative affairs including the payment of staff salaries. ECOSF requests the ratifying member states for early payment of budgetary contributions/arrears as per scale of assessment approved by the BoT so that the realization of ECOSF objectives can be achieved amicably.

**Contributions in the S&T Fund of ECOSF**: During the 1st Meeting of BoT of ECOSF, the BoT endorsed the pledged amount by Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan (US$200,000, US$100,000 and US$1,000,000 respectively) for the S&T Fund.

As per the decision of ECOSF BoT, the S&T Fund was established and the modalities approved by the ECO COM in 2012. Subsequently, in line with the decision of 2nd meeting of ECOSF BoT, the Eminent Scientists/Experts from the member states prioritized focus areas for research funding under S&T Fund in December 2015 which were approved by the Board in its 3rd Meeting held in Aug 2016 Accordingly, the Foundation invited the scientific proposals and 21 projects were received from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey. The Foundation’s Technical Evaluation Committee comprising scientists from Member States evaluated the concept proposals. But due to non-contribution in the S&T Fund, no research proposal has been funded as yet!

Member States are requested to make generous contribution towards the S&T Fund of ECOSF in line with the decisions of 2nd, 3rd and 4th Meetings of ECOSF BoT.

**C. Scientific Activities**

Since its inception, the Foundation has transformed itself into a dynamic and agile vehicle to promote Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and STEM Education to help build the capacity of its Member States to respond to the emerging challenges of the future. During the reporting year, despite financial constraints, the Foundation made reasonable progress to pursue its goal of promoting scientific and technological research and innovation related activities especially for the youth with an end goal to raise socio-economic standing of its 10 member states. This was made possible because of the collaboration and partnership developed by ECOSF with various global and regional organizations and programmes including under the Belt and Road Initiative of P.R. of China.

The years 2020 and 2021 have been challenging for the Foundation, particularly due to financial constraints and COVID-19 Pandemic. It had to cut down many of its core programmes during the reporting years. Nevertheless, the Foundation continued its programmes digitally/virtually and secured collaboration with a number of international organizations for pursuing its goal of promoting STI in ECO region and supporting different scientific organizations of ECO member countries. The scientific activities and collaboration developed during 2020-2021 are reported in succeeding paragraphs.

1. **Collaboration and Signing of MoUs**:

Since its establishment, ECOSF has developed strong working collaborations with international and regional organizations. The Foundation is proud to partner with many of most reputable organizations and development partners which include the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) and its Children and Youth Science Center (CYSC) | * La main a la pate Foundation of France * United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) |
| * Korea Institute of Science & Technology Evaluation and Planning (KISTEP) | * International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC), Kazakhstan |
| * Turkic World Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organization (TWESCO), Astana * Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) | * International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation under the auspices of UNESCO (ISTIC), Malaysia |
| * Federation of Engineering Institutes of Asia and the Pacific (FIEAP) Malaysia, and many other national and international organizations. | * Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Business Incubators & Science Parks Development (IRIS) under Auspices of UNESCO |
| * Inter Academy Partnership on Science Education Programme (IAP SEP) * MoU between “The Belt and Road Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Think Tank Cooperation Network” Member Institutes. ECOSF is the founding Member of the Network | * Isfahan Science & Technology Town (ISTT) of Iran * MoU with Sukkur IBA University, Pakistan for promotion and capacity building in IBSE in ECO Region |

The Foundation continues its partnership with Mustafa Prize for Science and Technology in the Islamic World with its secretariat established in Iran and collaboration with Secretariat for the Advancement of Science and Technology in Islamic World (SASTIW) based in Tehran for enhancing cooperation between scientists and scholars in the ECO region.

The Foundation also actively contributes towards promotion of UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) program in the ECO region.

1. **Organization of Scientific Conferences/Workshops/ Meetings**
2. **2nd Islamabad Science Festival 2021 at PNCA, Islamabad on 13 February 2021:** The 2nd Islamabad Science Festival was jointly organized by Campaignistan, ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) and Local Administration of Islamabad with the support of other national and international organizations on 13 February 2021 at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA).  The theme of festival was COVID-19 and students demonstrated their innovative solutions and exhibits with regards to the pandemic.  Over 50 government schools from across Islamabad participated in the festival and displayed their projects. A large number of students, teachers and public at large visited the Science Fair. It is well recognized that such events motivate youth and generate critical thinking amongst young students to pursue their career in STEM fields. Besides, such healthy activities create conducive atmosphere, which is essentially needed amidst the pandemic.
3. **Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival 2021:** Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) and ECO Science Foundation in Collaboration with Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) organized the 6th annual Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival 2021 (MLLF-2021) on February 21, 2021 to celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of Pakistan. A large number of intellectuals, poets, scholars, artists and general public participated in the festival. The objective of this festival was to provide a platform to intellectuals, writers and thinkers representing different languages to come together and present their work on various genres of art, literature, culture and education in mother languages of Pakistan.
4. **Thar Science Festival – 2021:** Two-day Thar Science Festival- 2021 was organized by Thar Education Alliance (TEA), ECOSF and District Government of Tharparkar in collaboration with other national/international organizations on 26-27 March 2021 at Mithi, Tharpakar, Pakistan. Students especially a large number of female students participated in the event and presented their scientific models. It was amazing to see the talent of students from a backward area!
5. **2nd International Virtual Congress on Medicinal Leech and Its Applications:** School of Biology, University of Tehran in collaboration with ECOSF co-organized the 2nd International virtual congress on “Medicinal Leech and Its Applications”, from 3-4 March 2021. Prof. Masoumeh Malek an expert in leach farming and management was the Principal Organizer. The objective of this congress was to provide a common platform for the students, researchers, industry, physicians and policy makers, who hold keen interest in a wide range of subjects related to medicinal leeches and their applications. A large number of scientists, researchers and experts on the subject, including scholars from the ECO Member Countries participated online in the conference.
6. **First Joint Symposium of the Rectors of ECO Member-State Universities:** The first ever joint symposium of the Rectors of ECO Member Countries was organized by Allahmeh Tabataba’i University of Iran in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat and ECO Specialized Agencies, including the ECO Science Foundation. Over 30 rectors and heads of universities from the ECO Member States participated in the event and recognized the significance of innovative and pragmatic approaches for enhanced regional cooperation in the field of education.
7. **High-end Dialogue for International Engineers and Technicians:** ECOSF in collaboration with China Association for Science & Technology (CAST), Beijing Association for Science & Technology (BAST), Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), and Beijing Institute of Engineers (BIE) organized the High-end Dialogue for International Engineers and Technicians on May 26, 2021. Objective was to generate a meaningful debate to support science and engineering, including the capacity building and human resource development in the key engineering sectors. The virtual event attracted a large number of experts, engineers and scientists from different parts of the world.
8. **10X Growth Plan for Innovation Summit Sialkot 2021 Governance & Taxation: Rethinking Competitiveness of Sialkot:** ECOSF in collaboration with Institute of Research Promotion (IRP) and University of Sialkot organized a virtual session on “Governance & Taxation: Rethinking Competitiveness of Sialkot” on March 24, 2021 during the Innovation Summit Sialkot 2021. The session brought together renowned public policy and taxation experts who deliberated talks on measures to improve competitiveness of Sialkot (an export oriented industrial city of Pakistan) through effective governance and taxation framework. Engr. Khalil Raza Scientific Officer ECOSF was the session organizer and moderator. The focus of this session was to demonstrate the strengths of Sialkot as a model important economic and industrial hub city of the country. Through exports, Sialkot-based small and medium industries are earning foreign exchange amounting to more than $2.5 billion annually to strengthen the national exchequer.
9. **BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training on Low Carbon Development for Belt and Road (B&R) Countries/ECO Countries**: The two-day 2nd Training Program of BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training Center with focus on “Low Carbon Development and New Energy Vehicles” held on 6-7 July 2021. Over 200 participants joined the training program virtually and on-site at Beijing, China. The training provided an excellent opportunity to policy makers, grid planners and industry players in electric mobility space to help them understand the options, barriers and success stories on implementation of policies and programmes towards promoting low carbon development in China, the ECO and other BRI countries. Training focused on three critical areas of low carbon development including renewable and clean energy development, smart and resilient power transmission and distribution grid infrastructure and latest electric mobility practices in the emerging markets. Renowned experts and industry leaders in low carbon development technologies from China and Pakistan provided their insights and highlighted strategies to achieve low carbon development goals. The training was very successful in its goal to strengthen the exchange and cooperation between the Chinese green enterprises and participating ECO/BRI countries to explore investment and business expansion opportunities in the areas of renewable energy development, cleaner mobility solutions and smart and resilient power grid operations.
10. **Hybrid Family Summer STEM Camp:** Pakistan Science Club (PSC) and ECOSF) organized hybrid Summer STEM Camps, that began in the month of June and continued through August 2021. Students, children along with their family members attended the camps. The camp attracted over 100 students and their families from different parts of Pakistan in the 1st Batch held in June 2021.
11. **UNDP and NEECA in collaboration with ECOSF co-organized a consultative workshop on ‘Scaling Up Electric Mobility in Pakistan’:** United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) of Pakistan in collaboration with ECOSF organized a consultative workshop on ‘Scaling Up Electric Mobility in Pakistan’ on July 29, 2021. The core objective of this meeting was to provide critical insights into the future of mobility and global trends in the electric mobility space, and what Pakistan needs to do to effectively develop the local eMobility market. The primary audience in this meeting were political leaders, policy makers at the government entities/ministries and industrial players.
12. **Facilitation for Developing Collaboration between Institutes/ Organizations of ECO Countries with Other International Organizations:** Since its establishment, the Foundation has been playing a role to facilitate and nurture collaboration between ECO Countries’ organizations and international and regional organizations. This year, facilitation was provided for collaboration between:
    * The Dawood Foundation (TDF) Pakistan and the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST)
    * Interaction of Pakistan Space Science Education Center (PSSEC) with China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) for promotion of Space Science and Technology among the Youth
13. **ECOSF Contributed to the Book “Communicating Science: A Global Perspective**”: A new book ‘Communicating Science- A Global Perspective’ was released by Australia National University (ANU) Press on 15 September, 2020. The book documents the global emergence of modern science communication. It has 40 chapters, 108 authors, and covers 39 countries. The book includes chapter on Pakistan entitled; “**Pakistan: Changing Landscape of Science Communication**” coauthored by Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, President of ECOSF and Engr. Khalil Raza, Scientific Officer ECOSF. The chapter also discusses policy framework and underscores as to why S&T have not been able to deliver socio-economic benefits to the general public at large, and why public engagement in science remains low in Pakistan.

This is the first endeavor describing how science communication has developed around the world, including in Pakistan. The book covers all regions and all cultures: advanced nations of Europe, Asia and the Americas, and emerging economies like Russia, Jamaica, Estonia, Iran and Pakistan.

The book is available for free download at:

<https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/communicating-science>.

1. **ECOSF assisted Government of Pakistan on Promotion of Electric Mobility:** ECOSF was contracted by the UNDP to provide technical support to the Government of Pakistan through Ministry of Energy in the formulation of National Electric Vehicle Policy and its associated Charging Infrastructure. Under this initiative, ECOSF served as key technical resource to provide strategic insights into market adoption of electric vehicles and development of National Standards and Framework for Electric Vehicles and associated Charging Stations. In this space, the Foundation has been assisting various National Bodies, including Ministry of Climate Change, National Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority (NEECA), Engineering Development Board (EDB), Pakistan Standards Quality and Control Authority (PSQCA), National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) in quantifying benefits, trade-offs, evaluating need assessment, tariff determination with a goal to address key challenges towards electric mobility transition in Pakistan.
2. **Participation/Contribution of ECOSF in the Scientific Meetings, Seminars, Workshops**: ECOSF has been contributing on various global scientific, technological, environmental and innovation forums. The forums provide opportunity to strengthen collaboration of the Foundation with international organizations and bodies and ensure access to development of newer and innovative approaches and technologies. During the report period (2020-2021), a good number of key meetings and events were participated in by the Foundation; which have been highlighted in ECOSF Newsletters. In majority of events, the ECOSF presentation was also shared with senior officials and scientific communities.

**D. ECOSF Outreach through Website, Facebook Page and Twitter**: The ECOSF maintains and generates extensive online presence through its website and various social media tools i.e., Facebook, Twitter; and the E-newsletter, which is shared via emails to disseminate the vital information and updates related to various opportunities and activities undertaken by the Foundation to promote Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the ECO region. The information about all the ECOSF activities i.e.; meetings, conferences, programs, updates etc. are regularly uploaded on its website ([www.ecosf.org](http://www.ecosf.org)), FB Page ([www.facebook.com/ECOScienceFoundation](http://www.facebook.com/ECOScienceFoundation)) & Twitter (@ECO4science).

ECOSF is partner/collaborator of international organizations, forums and institutions; hence, many scientific invitations and announcements are received and are regularly shared with Member Countries and uploaded on the website under the tab of “Opportunities” and on the Facebook. In addition to the social media presence and its website updates, the Foundation strives to take full advantage of promoting STI through print media channels as well.

iii. ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI)

1. **Background Information**
2. Latest Status of the Signing and Ratification of the ECOEI Charter

The founding decision of the ECOEI in Ankara was taken during the 8th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Council of Ministers (CoM) which was held in Almaty on 9 May 1998, in line with the paragraph on “Special Agencies and Regional Institutions” of the Article 10 of the Treaty of Izmir. The Charter of ECO Educational Institute was opened for signatures of ECO Member Countries on 9 May 1998, and all member countries, except Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, signed the charter.

The current signature and ratification status of the ECOEI charter by the members is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | States | Signature | Ratification\* | Entry into force |
| 1 | Afghanistan | 8 May 1998 | 24 June 2014 | 29 November 2001 under the article VIII of the ECOEI Charter |
| 2 | Azerbaijan | 8 May 1998 | 8 December 1998 |
| 3 | Iran | 8 May 1998 | 29 November 2001 |
| 4 | Kazakhstan | 8 May 1998 | - |
| 5 | Kyrgyzstan | 8 May 1998 | 31 January 2003 |
| 6 | Pakistan | 8 May 1998 | 22 June 2013 |
| 7 | Tajikistan | 8 May 1998 | 12 October 1998 |
| 8 | Turkey | 8 May 1998 | 14 November 2007 |
| 9 | Turkmenistan | - | - |
| 10 | Uzbekistan | - | - |
| TOTAL | | 8 | 7 |

\* Based on the information obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the depository of the ECOEI Charter.

ECOEI renewed its invitation to the Government of Kazakhstan to ratify the ECOEI Charter and become a full member via Note Verbal No. ECOEI/OG/20-06-02/01 dated 5 February 2020, addressed to Kazakh Embassy in Ankara.

ECO Educational Institute periodically contacts Embassies of Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan and invites Government of Turkmenistan and Government of Uzbekistan to sign the Charter of the ECO Educational Institute and become a full member of the Institute.

1. Institutional Structuring

Since his appointment, Prof Kirecci has been making great efforts to conclude the Host Country Agreement and finalize allocation of a separate space to ECOEI. The ECOEI initiated negotiation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, several ministries and other governmental bodies of the Republic of Turkey to finalize the text of Host Country Agreement. The signing of the agreement which acknowledges the diplomatic status of the Institute took place on July 23, 2020 between Minister of National Education of the Republic of Turkey Prof. Ziya Selcuk and President of the ECO Educational Institute Prof. M. Akif Kirecci. Turkish authorities conveyed the Host Country Agreement to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on October 27, 2020 for ratification. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the TGNA has recommended ratification of the agreement by its report on June 17, 2021. The agreement is put on the TGNA agenda and is expected to be discussed and put to voting by the Assembly soon after the opening of the new legislative term. The allocation of an independent premise with the required equipment for the ECOEI is predicated on the ratification of the Host Country Agreement. Allocation of the separate space by the Turkish Government is expected to follow the ratification of the Host Country Agreement by the TGNA.

1. Activities in 2021

Attendance to the 31st ECO RPC Meeting

ECO Educational Institute attended the 31st ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting, which was held virtually between January 12 and 21, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ECOEI President Prof. M. Akif Kirecci, and his delegation were present at the Committee of Human Resources & Sustainable Development and the Committee of ECO’s International Relations & ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions & Affiliated Bodies Sessions as well as the Plenary Session. At the Committee of Human Resources & Sustainable Development, under the education section, the Committee praised the ECO Educational Institute for organizing successful events and activities, invited ECO members to complete their signing and ratification process of ECOEI Charter, as well as to assign Focal Points and nominate members to the Academic Council of the Institute. The Committee also proposed ECOEI to focus activities around vocational trainings.

At the Committee of ECO’s International Relations & ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions & Affiliated Bodies, ECOEI’s past activities and future projects are discussed. The Committee praised the ECOEI for successfully holding the 3rd BoT Meeting on August 12, 2020, and congratulated President M. Akif Kirecci for his re-election to the post. The Committee also applauded the Republic of Turkey and ECOEI for signing the Host Country Agreement on July 23, 2020.

Consultation Meeting between the ECO Secretariat and ECO Specialized Agencies

The Consultation Meeting between ECO Secretariat, ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute, and ECO Science Foundation was held virtually on January 18, 2021. The President of ECO Educational Institute and his delegation, the President of ECO Cultural Institute, and his delegation, the President of ECO Science Foundation and delegation from ECO Secretariat participated to the virtual event. The goal of the meeting was to enhance cooperation and joint activity efforts among the ECO Specialized Agencies and to highlight the importance of culture, education, and science in sustainable development and social progress. At the meeting, all three presidents of the Specialized Agencies agreed on the significance of joint efforts and agreed on planning and organizing joint events, webinars, and projects within the year.

First Symposium of Rectors of the ECO Member State Universities

ECO Educational Institute participated in the first official symposium of the Rectors of the ECO States’ Universities virtually on March 4, 2021. The symposium was organized by ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) in partnership with the Allameh Tabataba’i University (ATU). The Symposium aimed to provide a platform for discussion of the possible opportunities for expanding academic ties between the universities. At the symposium, the ECO Secretary-General, the presidents of the ECO Specialized Agencies, Iranian Deputy Minister for International Affairs, and Iranian Deputy Chairman for Developing International Cultural Relations and representatives from seventeen universities from the ECO region were present.

In his speech, President Prof. M. Akif Kirecci, highlighted the importance of closer contact and cooperation between ECO agencies and universities in the region. Prof. Kire9ci also emphasized that the ECO Educational Institute is firmly committed to supporting the advancement of education in the Member States, through supporting experts, educators, institutions, and students. Finally the President brought about the upcoming proj ects of the ECOEI and invited universities to involve and participate in the Institute’s events and activities.

**Attendance to the 14th ECO Summit**

ECO Educational Institute attended 14th ECO Summit held virtually on March 4, 2021 under the chairmanship of Turkey’s president H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Convened under the theme of Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of COVID-19, the Summit was inaugurated by H.E. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Summit was attended by Heads of States of all ten member states, the ECO Secretary-General, as well as the ECO Observers, including the President of Turkish Cypriot State, Secretaries General of the Turkic Council, and International Energy Charter.

Visit by Iranian Embassy Delegation to ECOEI

Deputy Ambassador Ali Asgyhar Mehrabi and Legal Counsel Mr. Mohsen Hatamina of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran in Ankara paid a visit to ECOEI President Prof. M. Akif Kirecci on April 28, 2021. The parties discussed the physical and legal status of the Institute and informed the Iranian delegation about the Institute’s upcoming activities. President Kire9ci expressed his appreciation for Iranian government’s active interest in the Institute’s activities.

Visit by Uzbek Embassy Delegation to ECOEI

ECOEI President Prof. M. Akif Kirecci received Mr. Azizbek Z. Salahiddinov, Counsellor on Trade and Economic Issues and Mr. Khursid Rakhmanov, First Secretary on Trade and Economic Issues from the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Ankara in ECOEI premises on September 15, 2021. Mr. Salahiddinov and Mr. Rakhmanov have been informed about the Institute’s latest events, activities and future projects. Mr. President renewed his invitation to the Republic of Uzbekistan to sign the Charter of Economic Cooperation Organization Educational Institute and become a full member of the Institute. President Kire9ci reiterated that Uzbek institutions and officials are always very welcome to take part in the events and activities organized by ECOEI. Collaboration opportunities on several education-related issues have been discussed, as well.

Visit to Ambassador of Turkish Cypriot State

President of the ECOEI Prof. M. Akif Kirecci with his delegation paid a visit to H.E. Kemal Koprulu, Ambassador of Turkish Cypriot State in the Embassy on September 23, 2021. Prof. Kirecci invited experts from Turkish Cypriot universities to participate in the ECOEI event “High Level University Representatives Forum” on internationalization of higher education. President Kire9ci also expressed his willingness to incorporate higher education institutes from Turkish Cypriot State in a future research to be conducted by ECOEI which will measure the level of internationalization using an index, aiming to find out the weaknesses and strengths of universities in attracting international students. The parties reiterated their enthusiasm to cooperate in future projects.

1. **Consultation Meetings**

Consultation Meeting with Education Attaches of Member States in Ankara

President of ECOEI, Prof. M. Akif Kirecci has convened consultation meetings with Education Attaches of ECO Member States in Ankara from February 2019 to December 2019 in order to establish Focal Points in line with Institute’s Work Plan 2017-2019.

Negotiations on cooperation and joint training activities were held with the Uzbekistan Education attaché on February 19, 2019, with the Second Secretary of Embassy of Pakistan to Turkey Ifrah Tariq on May 7, 2019, with the Iranian charge d’affaires Jalal Nezafat on June 25, 2019, and with the Azerbaijani education attache Necibe Nesibova on September 10, 2019. The last of these meetings took place on December 18, 2019, where representatives from the Member States joined ECOEI for lunch and were informed about ECOEI’s future course of action.

Meeting with the Dean of the University of Applied Sciences and Technology in Iran

The President of ECOEI, Prof. M. Akif Kire9ci paid a visit to the University of Applied Sciences and Technology and hosted by the Dean, Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Reza Delavar, Advisor to the President and Director General for International and Scientific Cooperation Office. The meeting took place on January 15, 2020, in Tehran.

Consultation Meeting on Creating “New Models” in Education

The first of a series of meetings has been made with Prof. Dr. Hasan Bacanli on creating “models” in education to explore research and implementation prospects on the subject. It is the Institute’s objective to conduct several workshops and training at faculties of education in the several ECO Member States to raise awareness about the need for such models, further consider the definition and the scope of what constitutes a model and to organize an international contest to depict best models, with the long term objective of facilitating the development of an accredited education model that is borne out of ECO region and can be applied globally.

Consultation Meeting on Internationalization of Higher Education Index

ECO Educational Institute has created an expert work group and conducted the preliminary consultation meeting on the Internationalization of Higher Education in ECO member states on November 27, 2020. The work group will be adjusting and applying an internationalization index to assess and assist universities in ECO Member States in their internationalization efforts.

1. Academic Activities

**Exchange of Science and Math Teacher**

ECOEI sent a Note Verbal to Embassies of Pakistan and Azerbaijan in Ankara and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on February 6, 2020 in order to request their cooperation to initiate a teacher exchange programs between Turkey, Pakistan and Azerbaijan. ECOEI asked the Pakistani Government to nominate two science teachers, and the Azerbaijani Government to nominate two mathematics teachers, and the Turkish government to propose high schools to host the above teachers in Turkey. However, due to measures related to COVID-19 Pandemic, the exchange could not take place

**Invitation of Teachers to 4th Pre-School Education Summit**

A protocol was signed between the Association of Future in Education and ECOEI to jointly organize the 4th Pre-School Education Summit, which would be held on April 18-19, 2020 in Istanbul. ECOEI requested governments of Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan to nominate preschool teachers to attend the Summit, whose travel and accommodation expenses would be covered by the ECOEI and Association of Future in Education. Since the Summit was first postponed, and later transformed into a virtual event due to COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed visits could not take place.

Attendance to the Workshop on “Exchanging Experiences in Achieving Educational Goals of Sustainable Development”

The ECOEI attended the workshop on “Exchanging Experiences in Achieving Educational Goals of SDG” in Ankara on March 5, 2020. The workshop was jointly organized by Turkey’s Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and UNESCO.

The main objective of the workshop was to create a platform to discuss Turkey’s progress, achievements, and plans regarding Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular the SDG- 4: Quality Education, which aims to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’.

Report on “COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Education”

ECOEI issued a report which provides an overview of Member States' educational responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, to assess the impact of the pandemic on ECO member states in terms of education on May 2, 2020. The report covers the developments since the start of the outbreak in China in December 2019 to May 2020, in the ECOEI Member States. The report highlights the measures that are taken to resume education via distance learning methods by the Member States, their good practices and policies, and discusses the long term effects the pandemic might have on education. ECOEI organized a joint seminar on Teaching Excellence in cooperation with Isfahan University on August 5, 2020, via an online platform. Panelists included Prof. Dr. Semih Aktekin, Rector of Nevsehir Haci Bektas Veli University in Nevsehir, Turkey and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohammad Amiryousefi, University of Isfahan in Isfahan, I.R. Iran. In his seminar titled “Can We Transfer General Teaching Competencies into Higher Education: The Case of Turkey” Prof. Aktekin drew on his experience as a director at the Turkish Ministry of National Education in updating and publishing Teaching Competencies Document (2017) which sets an important framework for the development of policies for teacher education. In the second part of the seminar, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohammad Amir yousefi took the stage and gave his talk titled “Teaching Excellence: The Case of University of Isfahan.” Dr. Amir yousefi discussed the developments regarding improving the teaching competencies of university academics in Iranian universities in general and at the University of Isfahan in particular. The 3-hour virtual event hosted more than 50 academics and young researchers from all around the world Workshop on “How to Write and Publish Articles for International Journals” in Isfahan, Iran.

ECOEI has organized a workshop on “How to Write and Publish Articles for International Journals” in cooperation with Isfahan University, I.R. Iran on August 19, 2020, via an online platform. The main purpose of the workshop was to improve the academic writing skills of graduate students who pursue a Ph.D. degree in Isfahan University and introduce submission, evaluation, and publication procedures of scholarly journals to them.

Prof. Dr. Ali Ekber Sahin of Hacettepe University, Ankara conducted the workshop with the participation of around 50 online participants. ECOEI aims to expand this event to other universities in the ECOEI region to contribute to the academic output of the young scholars in the ECOEI Member States.

**Distance Education Experience Sharing Workshop between ECO Member Countries during COVID-19 Pandemic**

Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey in cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization Educational Institute organized a virtual workshop on Distance Education Experience Sharing between ECO Member Countries on October 14, 2020. Economic Cooperation Organization Educational Institute invited technical experts, heads of departments or and general directors at the Ministries of Education of ECO member countries in order to share the experiences and disseminate good practices among ECO countries in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Topics discussed include distance education, psycho-social support to students, parents and teachers, and teacher training during the COVID-19 pandemic. Delegates from the Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan were present.

The Launch of the Study in ECO.org Web Platform

The ECO Educational Institute completed a consultation meeting for the design and content of the StudyinECO.com website which will be active by the Spring 2022. The web platform will provide information on the ECO Member States and overview of their education system. A mockup design of the website can be found at <http://studyineco.babelcloud.net/html/>. The prospective students will be able to list available certificate, associate, undergraduate and graduate degree programs along with information on tuition & fees, scholarship, application and language requirements. By providing all the necessary information on one database, the web platform aims to increase the digital visibility of participating universities and increase the student movement between ECO countries.

“Mawlawi Research in Turkey” Panel of the 3rd International Conference on Mawlana Rumi

ECO Educational Institute sponsored the 12th session of the 3rd International Conference on Mawlana Rumi, titled “Mawlawi Research in Turkey”, which was held virtually on December 14, 2020, with the partnership of the University of Isfahan.

The 3rd International Conference on Mawlans Rumi, which is designed as weekly meetings, has started on November 17, 2020 and continued until December 17,

2020. A total of fourteen meetings were conducted with speakers from Iran, Turkey, China, the Balkan region, subcontinent, and Arabic-speaking countries. The ECOEI sponsored panel “Mawlawi Research in Turkey” was joined by esteemed scholars, Prof. Ali Temizel of Sel9uk University, Dr. Fahrettin Cosguner

Kirikkale University, Dr. Kadir Turgut of istanbul University, whose work on Rumi made wide- ranging impact on how we understand and expand his philosophy and love.

Publication of the Language Learning and Teaching Reports

The ECO Educational Institute has published a series of language reports based on the results of the sessions held during the on Language Teaching and Learning Workshop on October 19-20, 2018 in Ankara. The reports, which put forward the challenges of teaching and learning for Turkish, Persian, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Azeri Turkish, Urdu, Uzbek and Turkmen languages and encompass policy recommendations, were published in December 2020.

**Publication of the Report on “The Status of Mathematics Education in the ECO Member States”**

ECOEI has initiated a research project on “The Status of Mathematics Education in the ECO Member States” and a series of meetings have been made with a group of scholars and education experts on the subject in July, September, and October 2019. Following the series of consultative meetings, ECOEI commissioned a research project by two scholars on mathematics education in the ECO Member States, titled “The Status of Mathematics Education in the ECO Member States” which includes a comparative analysis of mathematics results in TIMMS and PISA in Azerbaijan, iran, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. The project report has been finalized in June 2020. The study was published by ECOEI in December 2020.

**Workshop on “How to Write and Publish Articles for International Journals” in Pakistan March 2021**

The ECO Educational Institute organized the third of the How to Write and Publish Articles in International Journals Workshop in cooperation with the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan on 29 March 2021. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Gonca Biltekin, who focused on research and writing of scholarly articles as well as submission and evaluation processes. The virtual 3-hour workshop consisted of three sessions and was attended by 60 graduate students and scholars from the IIUI.

Preschool Education Summit Jointly Organized by ECOEI and Future in Education Association

ECO Educational Institute co-organized an online Preschool Education Summit with Future in Education Association online on 25-26 September 2021 with the theme “Don’t give up on your dreams” with the participation of more than 700 educators, teachers-to-be and parents.

ECOEI President M. Akif Kirecci gave an opening speech highlighting the importance of preschool education and ECOEI’s determination to have an active role in improving preschool education practices. On the first day of the event, several experts made inspirational speeches on a wide variety of topics such as gamification, children and math, use of technology, preschool education policies, science and creativity. On the second day, the participants chose from 30 different workshops with equally diverse techniques and themes: counteracting cyberbullying, gifted children, drama-based math teaching, toy-making, puppet theatre, story-telling, musical activities, speech disorders, origami, introduction to coding and many more. On future occasions, ECOEI plans to transform the event into a multinational and multilingual gathering of educators, prospective teachers and parents from all ECOEI Member States.

**High Level University Representatives Forum**

ECO Educational institute organized a High Level University Representatives Forum on Internationalization of Higher Education, which was held online on September 30, 2021 with the participation of 60 experts. The purpose of the High Level University Representatives Forum was creating a high-level platform in order to discuss opportunities and challenges regarding internationalization of and regional cooperation on higher education.

The Forum brought together around 60 high level administrators and professionals of more than 30 universities from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Turkey and Turkmenistan in a technical setting, in which they had the opportunity to share their ideas, ongoing projects, challenges and establish partnerships. The Forum consisted of three roundtables dedicated to active discussion of several subjects. The themes of the roundtables included student mobility within the ECO region, strengthening scientific research collaboration in the ECO region, resource sharing and institutionalization of higher education cooperation. The participants discussed their experiences, challenges and strengths in issues ranging from scholarships, exchange programs, credit transfers, recognition of qualifications and joint degree programs.

During the Forum, ECOEI President Prof. M. Akif Kirecci announced studyineco.org, a platform that aims to promote student mobility within the ECO region by facilitating the initial research of prospective students on educational opportunities offered by universities in the region and invited the participating universities to submit the necessary information regarding their institutions to be uploaded on the website.

Publication of the Book on Common History, Education, Culture and Civilization

The ECO Educational Institute has edited and prepared the articles from the Symposium on Common History, Education, Culture and Civilization in 2019 for publication. More than 50 papers from 15 different countries were revised and edited to be published in two volumes in English by Fall 2021.

1. **Status of Implementation of the Decisions/ Recommendations of the Previous Meetings**

A. 24th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers (CoM) on 8-9 November 2019

- The Council encouraged the Member States to participate in the activities and programmes carried out by the Institute. The Council also desired the remaining Member States for early signing/ratification of the Charter of The Educational Institute.

ECOEI renewed its invitation to the Government of Kazakhstan to ratify the ECOEI Charter and become a full member via Note Verbal No. ECOEI/OG/20-06-02/01 dated 5 February 2020, addressed to Kazakh Embassy in Ankara.

ECO Educational Institute periodically contacts Embassies of Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan and invites Government of Turkmenistan and Government of Uzbekistan to sign the Charter of the ECO Educational Institute and become a full member of the Institute

B. **30th ECO RPC Meeting on 14-16 January 2020**

The ECO RPC recommended that;

* the Member States and ECO Secretariat to cooperate with the ECOEI to help it implement a need analysis and other studies to discuss the necessity of the Plan of Action for Education be brought before the Board of Trustees.
* requested Member States to convey their needs in the field of education to ECOEI to facilitate the development of an initial draft outline for the Plan of Action for Education as recommended in ECO Work Programme 2019 in line with the ECO Vision 2025.

President of ECOEI, Prof. M. Akif Kirecci, in his visits to and meetings with Ambassadors of ECO Member States, brought the issue of aforementioned Plan of Action to their attention and requested their input. The president has also convened consultation meetings with Education Attaches of ECO Member States in Ankara from February 2019 to December 2019 and urged member states to convey their needs in the field of education to ECOEI to facilitate the development of an initial draft outline for the aforementioned Plan of Action. In response, ECOEI received proposals by the Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Turkey to be incorporated into the Plan of Action on Education via ECO Note Verbale No HRSD/2021/1061 dated October 4, 2021 and continues to contact remaining Member States requesting their proposals for the Plan.

* called upon the Member States to participate in the activities of the Institute and underlined the importance of continuous support for Educational Institute’s future role in the region. The Council further requested the concerned Member States to actively attend the 3rd Meeting of ECOEI Board of Trustees to be held in the 1st half of 2020.

The 3rd Meeting of the ECO Educational Institute Board of Trustees was held virtually via Zoom on August 12, 2020, following the 3rd Meeting of the High Level Expert Group (HLEG) of the ECOEI which was held also virtually on August 10, 2020. The meeting was attended by the respected ministers, deputy ministers, and high level officials from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Republic of Turkey. The Turkish Cypriot State was also present as an observer state. The Secretary-General of ECO along with the relevant staff of the Secretariat as well as the President of ECO Science Foundation and President of ECO Cultural Institute have participated.

* requested the relevant authorities of the Member States to designate their focal points for the ECOEI and communicate them to the Institute at their earliest convenience.

ECOEI has convened consultation meetings with Education Attaches of ECO Member States in Ankara from February 2019 to December 2019 to establish focal points in order to facilitate the formation of a pool of experts and scholars.

ECOEI requested the contact information of focal points and nominations for Academic Council from the ECO Member States with the Note Verbale ECOEI/OG/21-07-01/01 dated January 7, 2021. So far, the Republic of Turkey, Kyrgyz Republic and Islamic Republic of Pakistan officially conveyed their focal points and Academic Council Members. Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Iran also inquired about the matter through informal channels. ECOEI continues to contact remaining Member States to appoint their focal points and Academic Council Members.

* urged the relevant members to sign/ratify ECOEI’s Charter to further promote cooperation in the field of education. The Council further requested the ratified Member States to pay their mandatory contributions
* ECOEI renewed its invitation to the Government of Kazakhstan to ratify the ECOEI Charter and become a full member via Note Verbal No. ECOEI/OG/20-06-02/01 dated 5 February 2020, addressed to Kazakh Embassy in Ankara.

ECO Educational Institute periodically contacts Embassies of Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan and invites Government of Turkmenistan and Government of Uzbekistan to sign the Charter of the ECO Educational Institute and become a full member of the Institute.

Member States were also called upon to make payments of the mandatory contributions via Note Verbale ECOEI/OG/21-07-01/02 dated January 7, 2021 sent through Embassies of the Member States in Ankara.

- encouraged the Specialized Agencies to enhance their coordination with the Secretariat and among themselves in order to boost their cooperation and sharing information about upcoming events with the relevant regional and international organizations in the educational, scientific and cultural fields.

ECOEI is in close contact with other specialized agencies and joined a consultation meeting between Presidents of the other specialized agencies upon invitation by the ECI held online on January 18, 2021. The President of ECO Educational Institute, the President of ECO Cultural Institute, the President of ECO Science Foundation as well as the Deputy Secretary General of ECO participated to the virtual event.

The goal of the meeting was to enhance cooperation and joint activity efforts among the ECO Specialized Agencies and to highlight the importance of culture, education, and science in sustainable development and social progress. At the meeting, all three presidents of the Specialized Agencies agreed on the significance of joint efforts and agreed on planning and organizing joint events, webinars, and projects within the year.

President of ECOEI, Prof. M. Akif Kirecci also took part in the First Symposium of Rectors in ECO Universities organized by ECI on March 4, 2021. The ECOEI invites and seeks input from ECO sister agencies for all its activities.

1. 31st Meeting of the ECO RPC on 12-21 January 2021

* The Council requested the Member States (except those who have already provided inputs) for expediting the provision of their views/inputs to identify the need and necessity of developing a Plan of Action on Education in line with the ECO Vision 2025, along with particulars of their nominations for ECOEI Academic Council and relevant focal points.

President of ECOEI, Prof. M. Akif Kirecci, in his visits to and meetings with Ambassadors of ECO Member States, brought the issue of aforementioned Plan of Action to their attention and requested their input. The president has also convened consultation meetings with Education Attaches of ECO Member States in Ankara from February 2019 to December 2019 and urged member states to convey their needs in the field of education to ECOEI to facilitate the development of an initial draft outline for the aforementioned Plan of Action. In response, ECOEI received proposals by the Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Turkey to be incorporated into the Plan of Action on Education via ECO Note Verbale No HRSD/2021/1061 dated October 4, 2021 and continues to contact remaining Member States requesting their proposals for the Plan.

* The Council requested the ECOEI and the ECO Secretariat to engage with the international organizations, including UNESCO and initiate collaboration in the areas of technical as well as vocational education and training.

President of ECOEI, Prof. M. Akif Kirecci visited UNESCO headquarters on November 20, 2019 and met with Mr. Jordan Naidoo, Director of the Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, and Mr. Bruno Mesquita de Valle, Chief of Unit for Capacity Development and Field Support. The parties discussed activities of UNESCO Capacity Development in Education Program (CAPED) in Afghanistan, cooperation opportunities between organizations, and exchange information on activities of CAPED and ECOEI.

ECOEI also continues its work to organize a Master Trainers Training (Vocational Education Training) to develop skills of vocational education teachers on using distance education and digital technologies.

* The Council expressed its gratitude to the ECOEI with collaboration of ECO Secretariat to organize a “High Level University Representatives Forum” to be scheduled in 2021 and encouraged all Member States to participate in this event.

ECO Educational institute organized a High Level University Representatives Forum on Internationalization of Higher Education, which was held online on September 30, 2021 with the participation of 60 experts. The purpose of the High Level University Representatives Forum was creating a high-level platform in order to discuss opportunities and challenges regarding internationalization of and regional cooperation on higher education.

The Forum brought together around 60 high level administrators and professionals of more than 30 universities from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Turkey and Turkmenistan in a technical setting, in which they had the opportunity to share their ideas, ongoing projects, challenges and establish partnerships. The Forum consisted of three roundtables dedicated to active discussion of several subjects. The themes of the roundtables included student mobility within the ECO region, strengthening scientific research collaboration in the ECO region, resource sharing and institutionalization of higher education cooperation. The participants discussed their experiences, challenges and strengths in issues ranging from scholarships, exchange programs, credit transfers, recognition of qualifications and joint degree programs.

* The Council requested the Member States to nominate their fresh National Focal Points to the Institute, as this would help in ensuring effective coordination between the ECOEI and ECO Member States in the relevant matters.

ECOEI requested the contact information of focal points and nominations for Academic Council from the ECO Member States with the Note Verbale ECOEI/OG/21-07-01/01 dated January 7, 2021. So far, the Republic of Turkey, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan officially conveyed their focal points and Academic Council Members. Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Iran also inquired about the matter through informal channels. ECOEI continues to contact remaining Member States to appoint their focal points and Academic Council Members.

* The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey and the ECOEI’s President for signing the Host Country Agreement Between the Government of Turkey and the ECOEI in July 2020 and requested the Republic of Turkey to expedite the ratification process.

The signing of the agreement which acknowledges the diplomatic status of the Institute took place on July 23, 2020 between Minister of National Education of the Republic of Turkey Prof. Ziya Selcuk and President of the ECO Educational Institute Prof. M. Akif Kirecci. Turkish authorities conveyed the Host Country Agreement to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on October 27, 2020 for ratification. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the TGNA has recommended ratification of the agreement by its report on June 17, 2021. The agreement is put on the TGNA agenda and is expected to be discussed and put to voting by the Assembly soon after the opening of the new legislative term.

**F. Proposed Calendar of Events**

**ECO Events**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Event/Activity** | **Venue** | **Date** |
| 1 | 77th Session of the UN General Assembly | New York | September  2022 |
| 2 | ECO-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of 77th Session of the UN General Assembly | New York | September  2022 |
| 3. | Bilateral Meetings with ECO existing partners and future potential international partners on the sidelines of 77th Session of the UN General Assembly |  |  |
| 4. | ECO Training Workshop/seminars for foreign services officers (officers dealing with external relations) from ECO Member States. | Islamabad | 2022 |
| 5. | Meeting of Heads of Broadcasting Organizations (Radio and Television) of ECO Member States | Iran | 2022 |
| 6. | First Meeting of Heads of ECO Football Federations | Kish Island | 2022 |
| 7. | First Meeting of ECO Heads of Scientific Innovation Bodies/Funds | Tehran | 2022 |
| 8. | Celebrations of the 30th independence anniversary of the six Central Asian ECO member countries | Tehran | 2022 |

**Non-ECO Events**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Event/Activity** | **Venue** | **Date** |
| 9. | UNOSSC Global South-South Development Expo | Tbd | 2022 |
| 10. | Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific | Bangkok | 2022 |
| 11. | UNIDO Networking Event | Tbd | 2022 |
| 12. | ASEAN, OIC, SCO, CICA, D-8, Turkic Council, IEC Summit/Ministerial and High level Meetings | Tbd | 2022 |
| 13. | Heart of Asia/ Istanbul Process | Tbd | 2022 |
| 14. | Involvement in events of international organizations/agencies where ECO could get Financial or Technical assistance for its Projects | Tbd | 2022 |

**Events to be organized by the Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Event/Activity** | **Venue** | **Date** |
| 16. | Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) | Pakistan | 2022 |
| 17. | A High Level University Representatives Forum (with participation of Heads/Vice Chancellors/Deans of top 10 ECO Universities) to be organized by ECOEI in collaboration with ECO Secretariat to discuss opportunities and challenges regarding regional cooperation on higher education. | TBD | 2022 |