

ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2023-2030)

A. Preamble:

Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

Noting that the environment plays a vital role in the existence of life on Earth and in providing well-being; while according to the national reports, scientific studies and technical papers, human activities in the ECO Region have raised serious issues related to the environment, making conservation one of the core issues that need to be addressed.

Further Noting the importance of Biodiversity for the processes that support all life on Earth, and taking into account the UNCBD's goal of "*living in harmony with nature by 2050*" and its Long-term Strategic Approach for Mainstreaming Biodiversity and the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Further Noting the significance of fostering sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development and incorporating policies into responses to the ongoing climate change crisis, and taking into account the Paris Agreement (2015) and the Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) under the UNFCCC.

Further Noting that extreme weather events have become more frequent and severe over the past few decades, exacerbating desertification and land degradation that can have disastrous effects on communities, sustainability, and food security; and taking into account the recent UNCCD Global Land Outlook (2022) which underscores land system challenges, showcases transformative policies and practices, and points to cost-effective pathways to scale up sustainable land and water management.

Recognizing the ECO Vision 2025 strategic objective to "*increase standard of living, quality of life, economic welfare and well being of people through adopting social protection and*

environment preservation policies in the region”, which is also ECO’s core objective, requires multi-faceted and supportive policies to address and tackle trans-boundary environmental challenges, frequent natural disasters, food security and health issues.

Taking into account the Nexus concept and the importance of the connections between the energy, water, food, land, and climate, to enable the Member States managing trade-offs and seek out synergies through appropriate law enforcement and policy mechanisms.

Bearing in mind that most ECO Member States are recovering from post-Covid economic and social repercussions, which have exacerbated and widened the effects of climate change.

Considering the Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States (2016-2020) and **Recognizing** the decisions of the ... ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in ..., which addressed resource mobilization, capacity-building, mainstreaming,,

Have agreed on the following Cooperation Framework on the Environment for implementation in the ECO Region:

B. Objectives:

To promote synergies and coordination between the Member States for the adequate implementation of suggested activities at the regional level and strengthen the ECO's role in environmental protection, with supporting actions at the multilateral, bilateral, national and sub-national levels with regular monitoring and review of progress.

To integrate biodiversity into the regional and national development policies, plans and strategies to advance conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across the ECO Region, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetics resources;

To mainstream low-carbon and climate-resilient development approach into the regional and national policies, plans and strategies in order to boost financial and technical assistance to the public and private sectors for mitigation and adaptation for advancing green and resilient growth.

To address land degradation issues across the ECO Region, facilitate cooperation for long-term solutions to halt desertification and reverse its negative consequences, and experience exchange in sustainable land use, drylands conservation, and restoration.

To contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to make the economic recovery from COVID-19 in the ECO Region a green recovery, using it as an opportunity for the Region to shift toward a more sustainable and inclusive development model.

To improve transformative actions by the governments and all of society, including indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society, and businesses, to contribute to the objectives of the MEAs, and other related multilateral agreements, processes and instruments.

To achieve the ECO Vision 2025 objective for environmental sustainability of the Region through regional economic, social and political cooperation.

C. Financial Resources:

The ECO Member States and the Secretariat shall consider priorities for providing crowdsourcing solutions, listing microfinancing options, giving information that connects stakeholders, allocating resources and exploring fundraising opportunities for facilitating the effective implementation of regional activities envisaged in this Framework.

As a basis for negotiating financial contributions by regional and international partners, sponsors, donors, and interested Member States; appropriate documentation and budget plans will be created based on the anticipated activities, arrangements for administration, and implementation of this Framework and/or its Annexes.

D. Ways and Means of the Implementation:

The intended goal of this Framework is to accelerate collaboration in the ECO Region, and the Member States shall take into account their defined and quantifiable objectives while developing their national plans.

The ECO Working Group on Environment will track the advancement of this Framework. The coordination for implementing the Work Programs on Biodiversity (Annex 1) and Climate Change (Annex 2) will be facilitated by two Expert Groups on Biodiversity and Climate Change, respectively, made up of the focal points from Member States. The LCI Steering Committee will oversee the LandCare Initiative (Annex 3).

ECO Secretariat with the technical and scientific support of the ECO-IEST coordinates communications, meetings and documentations, and will develop a Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism to track the advancement of this Framework and its annexes.

The ECO Member States shall also actively participate in the planning, monitoring, reporting, and reviewing this Framework in collaboration with relevant international organizations.

E. Suggested activities:

This Framework recommends umbrella headline activities for accelerating the regional cooperation for implementation by the ECO Member States while considering each Member State's sovereign rights and obligations over its own resources and national socioeconomic conditions and in accordance with other regional and international

obligations¹.

While the Appendix document (for Information only) provides some background and justification for a better understanding of the rationales; specific indicative activities are suggested in three focal areas, annexed to this Framework, to address the three Rio Conventions—on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification—for further consideration by the Members States as appropriate.

I. Natural Environment

1. **Land: (BD 6, 8)**

Ensuring that all landscapes are subject to integrated spatial planning, particularly in dry ecosystems, and ensuring that important biodiversity hotspots and their services are well protected by the national and transboundary protected areas' systems.

2. **Water: (BD 7, 8)**

Taking precautionary measures to safeguard and monitor water ecosystems, particularly in sensitive and vulnerable areas, and ensure that freshwater and marine services provided to people are protected through efficient, equitable, ecologically representative and well-connected systems.

3. **Species and genetic diversity: (BD 4, 5, 12)**

Ensuring active management measures for conservation of species and genetic diversity, controlling invasive alien species and adequate access to genetic resources, and equitable and fair sharing of the benefits, including the appropriate use of related traditional knowledge.

¹ The numbers in brackets show the interrelation of headline activities with two specific work programs on biodiversity (BD#) and climate change (CC#) as annexes of this Framework.

II. Human Environment

4. Energy: (CC 5, 6)

Developing strategies to improve energy efficiency in the transportation, residential, industrial and agriculture sectors; reforming taxing programs; abandoning fossil fuel subsidies; investing in low-carbon and decarbonization technology; supporting renewable energy; and increasing regional power trade.

5. Settlements: (CC 7)

Enhancing solid waste reduction, air quality, water and wastewater management, infrastructure resilience, disaster risks early response, and green buildings in urban and rural areas.

6. Industry: (CC 8, 9)

Encouraging responsible mining and industrial practices for reducing water, soil, air, plastic, light, radiation and noise pollution, minimizing environmental footprints of supply chains, and advancing low-carbon businesses.

III. Crosscutting

7. Planning: (BD 1, 2, 3) (CC 1, 2, 3, 4, 12)

Implementing National Action Plans on biodiversity and climate change for integrating mitigation and adaptation strategies and biodiversity-related policies into national development practices at all levels and across all sectors.

8. Health: (BD 9, 11) (CC 11)

Enhancing the benefits of nature for human health and well-being, protecting people from severe natural occurrences, and mitigating the effects of climate change ecosystem-based approaches.

9. Food security: (BD 10, 13, 14) (CC 10)

Ensuring sustainable agriculture and food production, availability, access and

utilization through climate-smart and fair trade approaches, and mitigate potential adverse effects on ecosystem services.

10. Circular Economy: (BD 13) (CC 1, 3, 4)

Fostering sustainable use and climate-friendly practices by internalization of externalities and shifting from linear to the circular economy; integrating green financing into policies, regulations, planning, development procedures, legal instruments, poverty reduction strategies; and reducing environmental impacts at all levels and across all sectors of the economy through incentives measures.

IV. Mainstreaming

11. Data and information: (BD 15) (CC 13)

Creating effective mechanisms for gathering, managing, updating, and exchanging environmental data and information, collaborating to harmonize standards, and networking national monitoring, early warning and reference centres.

12. CEPA: (BD 16) (CC 14)

Encouraging Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) through training and capacity-building programs, scientific conferences, exchange of technical visits, technology transfer, joint research projects, and knowledge management, including traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities.

13. Participatory approach: (BD 17) (CC 15)

Engaging actors beyond national Governments, including subnational governments, cities and other local authorities, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and

local communities, women's groups, youth groups, the business and finance community, the scientific community, academia, faith-based organizations, citizens at large, and other stakeholders.

14. Collaboration: (BD 18) (CC 16)

Enhancing efficiency and effectiveness integration with relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant international processes through inter-ministerial and intersectoral collaboration, coordination and consultation mechanisms and preparatory meetings prior to the COPs of the related conventions to exchange best practices and lessons learned and develop common positions as appropriate.

Appendix: Information document

Annex 1: Work Program on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2023-2030)

Annex 2: Work Program on Climate Change in ECO Region (2023-2030)

Annex 3: Roadmap for implementation of the 1st phase of ECO LandCare Initiative (2023-2025)