

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

A. Preamble:

Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

Noting the importance of Biodiversity, for the processes that support all life on Earth, including humans by providing healthy ecosystems.

Bearing in mind the Work plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020) which envisaged promoting technology transfer, capacity building and enhanced cooperation in conservation, sustainable use and management of biodiversity at the national and regional levels,

Further noting the need for policy changes across the ECO Region to reform economic, social, and financial paradigms so that the trends that have accelerated biodiversity loss will stabilize by 2030 and enable the restoration of natural ecosystems to achieve the CBD goal of "living in harmony with nature by 2050."

Taking into account the CBD Long-term Strategic Approach for Mainstreaming Biodiversity and the "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030 adopted in the COP-15 in Montreal, Canada in December 2022.

Recognizing the relevant decisions of the previous meetings of ECO Environment Ministers, as well as biodiversity working group addressed resource mobilization, capacity-building and mainstreaming.

Have agreed on the following Work Program on Biodiversity in the ECO Region:

B. Objectives:

To Ensure 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, and to put biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of the planet and people;

To integrate and mainstream biodiversity into the regional and national development policies, plans and strategies in order to advance green and sustainable development;

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 Convention on Biological Diversity, its Protocols, and other biodiversity-related multilateral agreements, processes and instruments.

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

To Contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

C. Financial Resources:

The ECO Member States shall consider priorities, allocate resources and provide voluntary financial support and incentives for the implementation of this Work Program;

The ECO Member States and the Secretariat will explore fundraising opportunities for the implementation of priority plans/programs envisaged in this Work Program;

ECO Secretariat will strengthen its ties with relevant international donor agencies for facilitating the effective implementation of regional plans/programs envisaged in this Work Program as a complementary step to the Member States' interactions with those agencies.

D. Ways and Means of the Implementation:

The ECO Member States have a responsibility to implement mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review of this Work Program.

The coordination for implementing this Work Program will be facilitated by the Expert Group on Biodiversity, made up of the focal points from the Member States.

ECO Secretariat shall play a coordinative role in the implementation of the Work Program and promote and facilitate, in partnership with relevant international organizations, activities for resource mobilization and to strengthen capacity for implementing the Work Program.

ECO IEST shall provide technical and scientific support for the implementation of this

Work Program in particular for capacity-building, exchange of scientific and technical visits, technology transfer, and knowledge management.

E. **Suggested activities:**

This Work Program suggests actions for consideration by the Member States that need to be initiated immediately in harmony with relevant regional and international obligations, taking into account the sovereign rights and responsibilities of each member state over its own resources and national socio-economic conditions¹.

I. **Planning**

1. **Assessment: (2-3) (1-5)**

Enhancing tools and methodologies for biodiversity assessment, valuation, and accounting to support biodiversity-friendly decision-making procedures.

2. **Policies: (2-1) [1]**

Updating NBSAPs to incorporate conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components into policies, regulations, planning, development procedures, poverty reduction strategies, and reducing environmental impacts at all levels and across all sectors of the economy.

3. **Financing: (5-2) (6-1)**

Boosting financial support including new, additional, and efficient resources for the implementation of the national and regional biodiversity plans, integrating values of biodiversity in investment portfolios and lending schemes, and ensuring that public and private economic and regulatory incentives and subsidies are either positive or neutral for biodiversity.

II. **Conservation**

4. **Wild species: (2-4) [b]**

Considering the CITES provisions for active management measures to support species recovery and conservation, as well as the genetic diversity of wild and domesticated fauna and flora, including through ex-situ conservation.

5. **Invasive alien species: (2-6) [c]**

Controlling and eradicating invasive alien species and their impacts with a focus on priority species, and preventing, or lowering the rate of introduction to the

¹ The numbers in brackets (#) and square brackets [#] show related activities proposed in the Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States (2016-2020)² and the Work plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020), respectively.

natural ecosystems.

6. **Land management: (2-8) [j]**

Ensuring that all landscape, seascape, urban and production areas in the region are subject to integrated spatial planning that takes biodiversity into account, addresses changes and maintains existing intact and wilderness areas in-particular in dry ecosystems to combat desertification with a special emphasis on erosion, and sand and dust storm.

7. **Marine: (3-1 to 3-5) [c] [f]**

Taking precautionary measures to safeguard and monitor the marine environment, particularly in sensitive and vulnerable ecosystems.

8. **Protected Areas: (2-2)(2-3)(3-1) [f]**

Assuring those important biodiversity hotspots in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems and their services provided to people, are preserved through efficient, equitable, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of national and transboundary protected areas, as well as other area-based conservation measures.

9. **Climate change: (B-2) (B-3) [g]**

Reducing the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contributing to mitigation and adaptation using ecosystem-based approaches and striving towards net positive impacts.

III. Sustainable use

10. **Agriculture/Forestry: (B-1) [m] [l]**

Ensuring that all agricultural, aquaculture, pastoralism and forestry practices are managed in a sustainable manner, and increase the productivity and resilience of these production systems.

11. **Health:**

Improving nature's contributions to the management of air, land and water quality, protection of people from severe natural occurrences and providing advantages for human health and well-being.

12. **ABS: [h]**

Putting policies in place on regional and national scales to provide adequate access to genetic resources, and equitable and fair sharing of the benefits, including the appropriate use of related traditional knowledge.

13. Business: (5-1) [i]

Promoting sustainable extraction and production methods, sourcing, certification, trade and supply chains, to gradually cut back negative impacts (such as overexploitation, pollution, illegal traffic and unfair trades) on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

14. Ecotourism: (2-5)

Encouraging responsible ecotourism in order to support local communities and mitigate potential adverse effects on biodiversity.

IV. Mainstreaming

15. Data and information: (6-2) (4-2) [k] [i]

facilitating the establishment of the appropriate mechanisms to avoid, manage, or mitigate the negative effects of new technologies including biotechnology on biodiversity and human health, lowering the risk of these consequences, and strengthening the capacity for such measures and putting them into practice.

16. CEPA/TK: (4-1) (4-5) (B-5) (B-6) (B-7) [e]

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.

17. Participatory approach: (4-6)

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, representatives of sectors related to or dependent on biodiversity, citizens at large, and other stakeholders.

18. Collaboration: (2-7) [e] [j] [d]

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 biodiversity

related conventions to exchange best practices and lessons learned and develop common positions as appropriate.

F. **Suggested list of meetings:**

The following is a list of potential meetings that could help with the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and regional synchronization of this Work Program.

Each meeting will include technical representatives from the governments of the Member States, the ECO Secretariat and relevant affiliated bodies, selected specialists, academic and research institutions, stakeholders from the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations. Based on the financial implications and available resources and a balanced representation of disciplines and sectors, the Secretariat will examine and approve candidates.

It is recommended that each Expert Group meet annually (or at least biannually), either through teleconference or in person if it is more convenient.

The proposed template for including the meetings of this Work Program in the ECO Calendar of Events is annexed. It should be considered when scheduling each meeting at the proper time and venue.

- Expert Group on Biodiversity, to consider implementing progress and 1, 2, 3, 18.
- Technical Expert Group on Ecosystem Management and Protected Areas, to consider activities: 6, 7, 8.
- Technical Expert Group on Fauna and Flora, to consider activities: 4, 5, 12.
- Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Use, to consider activities: 9, 10, 11, 13, 14.
- Technical Expert Group on Natural Environment CEPA, to consider activities: 15, 16, 17.

Annex: Proposed template for Calendar of Events

Row	Action #	Title	Host	Venue	Date
1.		Expert Group on Biodiversity	(tbc)	(tbc)	(tbc)
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