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**AGRICULTURE** **SECTION**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Agriculture is one of the key sectors that can accelerate the economic growth in the region through an enlarged productivity. The efforts to counter the prevailing hunger and poverty should be predominantly made in rural areas, which nearly half of the ECO region’s population comprising of poorest and starving inhabitants. It requires sustainable pro-poor investments in the areas of agriculture, rural development and social protection aimed at lifting the people out of their chronic undernourishment and the alleviation of poverty.
2. ECO, as a regional organization dedicated to economic and social development of its Member States accords top priority to food security and agricultural development in the region. The ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS), has launched/ under implementation since 2008 to comprehensively focus on enhancing agricultural production in the Member States.
3. As the objectives also stipulated in the ECO Vision as higher food security and safety in the Region, ECO continues its efforts to establish an institutional basis for long term cooperation with Member Countries, International Organizations and Financial Institutions to enhance implementation of regional/national projects under RPFS to achieve sustainable agricultural development in the region.
4. In the context of the above, the ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) was inaugurated in Ankara, to mobilize and coordinate the implementation of the RPFS in collaboration with the Member States. Moreover, the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA), ECO Permanent Veterinary Commission, (ECO-VECO), ECO Meteorological Calibration Centre (ECO-MCC) and ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Water Utilization for Agriculture (ECO-CEEWUA) are the institutions that can give momentum on the implementation of the ECO-RPFS.

# Priority Area-1: Food Security and Implementation of the ECO-RPFS

# ECO Vision approach and target:

1. The ECO Vision 2025 has mandated the Secretariat and Member States to develop strategies, policies, plans and projects to contribute to the new development approach of the Region and sustainable development goal. In this regards, higher food security and safety in the region should be achieved. Also, enhancement of capability of the participating research institutes and local communities for propagation and release of natural enemies of pests and diseases of the selected crops should be finalized. In this context, the Secretariat and the Member States are requested to revise and reformulate national and regional agricultural development plans to adapt themselves to the ongoing global agenda.

# Background information and Recent Developments:

1. During the First ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, held in Islamabad on 23-25 July 2002, the preparation of a regional agricultural development and food security strategy in line with the national programs of the Member States was decided. In consequence of a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) conducted by ECO and FAO, Regional Food Security Programme was prepared in 2008, then the aforementioned Programme was revised in 2010.
2. During the 20th ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) which was held in 16–18 February 2010, General Coordination of RPFS was given to Türkiye with consensus and the 17th Informal ECO Council of Ministers (COM) which was held in New York, 2010 agreed on the establishment of ECO-RCCFS for the efficient coordination of RPFS in Ankara, Türkiye. The 19th COM, which was held in Istanbul, Türkiye on December 22, 2010, approved the establishment of ECO-RCCFS for the implementation of the RPFS in Ankara, Türkiye. ECO-RCCFS was established to continue its activities during the Programme period at the facilities of the Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Ankara. Main task of ECO-RCCFS is to provide coordination between the Member Countries regarding the projects under the RPFS to ensure food security in the field of food and agriculture, to develop cooperation and to implement Programme activities in an effective way.
3. The RPFS (2010-outdated), which was prepared with the technical assistance of FAO, focused on enhancing agricultural production and trade of agro-products in the ECO Member States. It included 10 components: 9 regional components and 1 specific component for Afghanistan. In line with this, ECO-RCCFS received project proposal documents from three Member Countries; however, there was almost no reference nor programmatic alignment made to the RPFS. At the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting, ECO-RCCFS reminded the Member Countries to align their project proposals with the priorities of the RPFS[[1]](#footnote-1) in order to fully integrate all project proposals in the programme portfolio.
4. During the 27th RPC in December 2016, the Council requested the 2nd Steering Committee of the ECO-RCCFS to consider the revision of the ECO-RPFS, if necessary. During the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting in 2019, the Member States were informed that the RPFS needs to be updated.
5. ECO-RCCFS has informed the Secretariat that they are in a process of formulating a project titled “Support for the Transformation of the ECO Food Security Coordination Center (ECO-RCCFS) from a programme-based organization to a self-sustainable institution in the Economic Cooperation Organization-GCP/SEC/017/TUR” to be funded by the Government of Türkiye under the FAO-Türkiye Partnership Programme (FTPP-II) on Food and Agriculture. The Funding Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye and FAO was signed for allocation of funds from the FTPP-II.
6. The proposed project aims to strengthen ECO-RCCFS’s capacity to provide systematic and useful support to its Member States, so that Member States acquire necessary advice, guidance and information for improving their food security and nutrition policies and programmes. ECO-RCCFS’s contribution will be more effective and efficient when the Centre is integrated as a self-sustainable institution of ECO with its operational cost provided by the Member States, with an updated RPFS.
7. First, Technical capacity of ECO-RCCFS in food security analysis, program development and management was strengthened through regular learning and training. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was developed to help its staff carry out regular food security analysis efficiently. The analysis results and policy updates are sharing regularly among ECO Member States through ECO-RCCFS Steering Committee Meetings, the Centre’s website, and official publications of ECO. Second, based on the analytical evidence was provided by ECO-RCCFS with project support. Priority interventions are identified in consultation with Member Countries and shared with relevant donors including IFIs (International Financial Institutions) for funding. FAO provided technical support to the ECO-RCCFS to update Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) of ECO. Third, basic documents of ECO-RCCFS including charter, strategic plan, organigram and work plan will be developed and updated by ECO-RCCFS and approved by ECO-RCCFS Steering Committee. With FAO’s support, ECO-RCCFS will conduct bilateral meetings with its Member States and relevant bodies of the ECO to develop and agree on its working principles and modalities. Fourth, ECO-RCCFS will approach Member States to co-finance ECO-RCCFS’s core activities to ensure the sustainability of ECO-RCCFS after the completion of the project.
8. The 6th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture held in the Republic of Azerbaijan on the December 4th, 2019, appreciated the efforts made by FAO and ECO-RCCFS for initiation of a project proposal concerning the transformation of the nature of ECO-RCCFS and took note of the revison of the RPFS in line with the current food security situation of the ECO region and related policy priorities of ECO Member Countries. The said Ministerial Meeting requested a more comprehensive, willful partnership and financial contribution of all Member States for accelarating its implementation; and recommended the Secretariat to consider different aspects of the proposal and to take required actions through the respective organs of ECO for identification of ECO projects as provided for ECO functional methodology.
9. ECO-RCCFS updates "www.ecorccfs.org" regularly in English and Russian. Following the recent RPC Meetings, requested the Member States to contribute for updating the ECO-RCCFS website through provision their studies, inputs, experiences and best practices relating to food security and agricultural issues. ECO-RCCFS established a first food security data portal (“ECO-RCCFS Data & Statistics[[2]](#footnote-2)”) of ECO region under the website of ECO-RCCFS. Currently the portal provides key SDG indicators of four dimensions of food security – availability, accessibility, utilization and stability. ECO-RCCFS will continue to provide the data and analysis to contribute to a better preparedness for food crisis by the Member Countries.
10. A tripartite virtual meeting to discuss regional projects on agricultural and food security, enhanced cooperation between ECO Secretariat, ECO-RCCFS, and FAO was held on July 9, 2020. Also, the 1st Consultation Meeting on Updating the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security was held on December 8, 2020 between ECO Secretariat, ECO-RCCFS, FAO and Member States to get needs and priorities of the Region for tailoring RPFS. The report of the meeting was circulated among Member States through the Note Verbale No. AI/2021/200 dated 25/2/2021. During this meeting, Member States were informed about updating of the RPFS. The final draft of ECO Regional Program for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) circulated among Member States through the Note Verbale No. AI/2021/928 dated 25/8/2021 for their views and comments for further finalization. During this time, only comments were received from Iran. The updated RPFS was submitted and discussed at the 6th High Level Experts Meeting (HLEM) and was adopted by the Ministers during the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture on July 5-6, 2022 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
11. The ECO-RPFS was accepted by the Member States, based on the key food security challenges in the ECO region, which inevitably includes aspects of food access and utilization. As a first step for developing an evidence-based regional programme, the ECO-RCCFS developed “Overview of Food Security in the Countries of ECO[[3]](#footnote-3)” for 2019 and 2020 and presented them to Member States respectively, at the 5th High-Level Expert Meeting in Baku in December 2019[[4]](#footnote-4), and High Level Expert Meeting in Tashkent in June 2020.
12. The ECO-RCCFS in collaboration with ECO Secretariat and FAO held Introductory Training on Project Cycle Management (PCM) for ECO Regional Food Security Programme on 16-17 March 2021 (Note Verbale No. AI/2021/224 dated 2/3/2021).Likewise, the Webinar Series on “Sustainable Food Systems – Its Concept and Practices in the ECO Region” was held by aforementioned authorities on 1st June 2021 (Note Verbale No. AI/2021/543 dated 26/5/2021). The aim of this webinar was to provide better understanding of food systems and approach, as well as the objectives and the process of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.
13. The "Sub Regional Conference on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye" was held on 29 September 2021 via the collaboration of ECO-RCCFS, FAO and Türkiye with the participation of Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the countries of the region. The event aimed to raise awareness about the complexity of food loss and waste, its impact on value chain actors, consumers, service providers and the environment and discussing possible solutions.
14. The secretariat initiated a small-sized project namely, "Organic agriculture in ECO Member States and prospects for market integration", in order to provide harmonized regulatory framework and to make feasible certification and market integration in the ECO region on organic agricultural production. The report of the project was circulated among Member States for their views and comments through the Note Verbale No. A&I/Organic/2021/527 dated 23 May 2021.
15. The 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting preceded by 6th High Level Experts Meeting (HLEM) on Agriculture was held on July 5-6, 2022 by the Republic of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. The Meeting was attended by the delegations from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Host). The Turkish Cypriot State also participated at the meeting as the observer. The representatives of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ECO Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS), ECO Seed Association (ECOSA), Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), as well as the delegation of ECO Secretariat headed by ECO Secretary General also participated in the meeting. The meeting mulled over certain aspects of food security, intensification of agricultural production and sustainable methods for agricultural development. Likewise, the event discussed on the factors that affected food security across the globe included rapid inflation and instability in food prices, uncontrolled population, climate change and related impact on agricultural production, frequent migration, poverty, unemployment, lack of proper housing and access to healthcare as well as the undesirable conditions development in the aftermath of COVID-19. The Tashkent declaration on cooperation in agriculture and food security in the region and updated ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) were adopted by the Ministers. Also the Ministers of the Region welcomed the transformation of ECO-RCCFS to a self-sustainable institution of ECO as a specialized agency and while calling Member States to support this transformation process, requestedSecretariat to follow necessary legal procedure to this end in accordance with relevant ECO documents.
16. During the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated its readiness for hosting the 8th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture preceded by High Level Expert Meeting. The exact dates and details will be circulated among Member States after receiving from the host country.
17. The 4th Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) on the implementation of the RPFS was held on October 6, 2022, in Istanbul, on the sidelines of the Regional Conference on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Europe and Central Asia. The Report of the meeting was circulated among Member States through the NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECO-RCCFS/2022/1531 dated November 3, 2022.
18. The project titled, "Transformation of ECO-RCCFS from a programme-based organization to a self-sustainable institution", which was started on January 1st, 2020 by the Republic of Türkiye and FAO, was concluded on June 30, 2023. The conclusion of the subject project was proclaimed during the 19th Project Monitoring Group (PMG) Meeting on September 12, 2023.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

24. The Council, while welcoming the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 8th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, preceded by 7th High Level Experts Meeting, may request the host authorities to send date and details of the events. The Council may urge the Member States to actively participate in these Meetings.

25. The Council may appreciate the ECO-RCCFS for successful conclusion of the project namely "Transformation of the ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) from a programme-based organization to a self-sustainable institution of ECO" and mandated the ECO-RCCFS and ECO Secretariat to report back to the 8th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture.

26. The Council may request the ECO-RCCFS with the assistance of Secretariat to produce concrete project proposals for the implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) to promote coordination and increase synergy in ECO regional efforts and enhance food security through technical cooperation, including institutional capacity development, transfer of technology and increasing agricultural productivity.

27. The Council, while welcoming the offer of the Republic of Türkiye for hosting the 5th Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO-RCCFS for Implementation of the ECO-RPFS, may request the relevant authorities to send the exact date and details of the meeting. Also, the Council may request the Member States to cooperate on the implementation of the subject ECO-RPFS.

28. The Council may appreciate ECO-RCCFS for updating its website content at "[www.ecorccfs.org](http://www.ecorccfs.org)" and may invite Member States to further enrich the subject website by continuing to provide their studies, inputs, experiences and best practices relating to food security and agricultural issues.

# Priority Area-2: Strengthening Seed Supply in the ECO Region

1.

# ECO Vision Approach and Target:

30. The ECO Vision 2025 has mandated the Secretariat and Member States to develop strategies, policies, plans and projects to contribute to the new development approach of the region and sustainable development goal. In this regards, agricultural export potentials of the Member Countries and intraregional agriculture trade potentials should be realized. Likewise, infrastructure requirements in production, processing and export chain of the selected crops and preparation of investment plans should be identified. In this context, the Secretariat and Member States are requested to revise and reformulate national and regional agricultural development plans to adapt themselves to the ongoing global agenda.

# Background information and Recent Developments:

31. ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) was established in 2010 in Ankara for exchange of experiences among ECO Member Countries as well as increasing seed trade, facilitate seed activities and represent seed industry at the national, regional and international level.

32. ECOSA aims to improve the infrastructure of the seed sector in the ECO countries and to raise it to the level of developed countries as well as to increase seed trade with high quality. Likewise, ECOSA is aiming to contribute to the enhancement of agricultural production in accordance with its vision and mission. In order to increase high quality seed trade in the region, ECOSA supports:

* Removing the bureaucratic obstacles of the countries of the region,
* Ensuring the validity of international quality standards,
* Standardization of the certification and registration systems,

33. For this purpose, a project named, Harmonization of Seed Certification Systems in ECO Countries, was carried out with the financial support of Turkish Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, ECO and the Seed Union of Türkiye. The first part of the project was completed. The outcome report of the first part of the project was prepared and presented to all ECO countries. The start of the second phase of the project and the introduction of these developments are important for success of these achievements.

34. As an outcome of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the Region, which was completed by organizing the Final Regional Seed Workshop on November 4-6, 2015 in Antalya, Türkiye, an ECO Regional Seed Agreement was formulated and sent to the Member States for their views and comments. The 27th Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting held on December 05-08, 2016 at the ECO Secretariat requested Secretariat to proceed for approving the ECO Seed Agreement by the decision making bodies of ECO. The ECO Secretariat circulated the draft ECO Regional Seed Agreement several times among Member States for their views and comments. The agreement needs to be finalized.

35. The Secretariat requested the Member States to share their views and comments on the draft ECO Regional Seed Agreement for expediting the finalization of the subject document (thorough the NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECOSA/2023/1099 dated July 31, 2023). To date Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan have sent their views.

36. ECOSA has organized 7 Seed Trade Congresses to improve seed trade in the region and beyond. The 7th ECO Regional Seed Trade Congress held in Antalya, Türkiye between 29 November- 01 December 2019 with the attendance of more than 200 businessmen and stakeholders from ECO region. The main sponsor of the congress and the business forum was Turkish Seed Union (TURKTOB). The 8th ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference and Seed Trade Fair and ECO Expert Meeting on Seed Sector will be held by Türkiye. The Secretariat requested relevant authorities of Türkiye to convey the details of the subject events at the earliest convenience (thorough the NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECOSA/2023/377 dated March 19, 2023)

37. The Secretariat circulated the Statute of the ECOSA for information of the Member States through the NV No. A&I/ Agriculture/ECOSA/2023/817 dated June 15, 2023 and requested the Member States to nominate their representatives for the Advisory Board of ECOSA. To date, Azerbaijan Türkiye and Uzbekistan have responded.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

38. The Council while welcoming the preparation of ECO Regional Seed Agreement as an outcome of the implementation of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the Region, may request the Member States (except Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan) for accelerating their views on the subject document.

39. The Council, while appreciating the ECOSA for its proposal to host the 8th ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference and Seed Trade Fair and ECO Expert Meeting on Seed Sector Development, may request the host authorities to send exact date and details of the meeting. The Council also may request ECOSA to organize training courses on seed industry for ECO Member States in cooperation with FAO-SEC,Turkish Plant Breeding Union (BISAP) and other possible institutions.

40. The Council, while appreciating ECOSA regarding formation of the Advisory Board of the subject Association, may request Member States (except Azerbaijan Türkiye and Uzbekistan) to convey their nominations for the mentioned Advisory Board.

# Priority Area-3: Cooperation on Animal Trade and Veterinary Services

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

41. The ECO Vision 2025 envisages to achieve higher food security and safety in the region. ECO Vision has mandated the Secretariat and Member States to develop strategies, policies, plans and projects to contribute to the new development approach of the region and sustainable development goal.

# Background information and Recent Developments:

42. The 16th RPC Meeting proposed to establish ECO Permanent Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO) in order to deal with animal diseases in ECO region. Draft Statute for establishing ECO-VECO was prepared by a working group composing of the Heads of Veterinary Organizations in the ECO Countries in 2006 and 2007. It was revised in collaboration with FAO, OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) and other relevant organizations, in 2009 during the 2nd Task Force Meeting in Tehran, Iran. The Draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO-VECO was submitted by Iran, during the 2nd Heads of Veterinary Organizations Meeting held on April 20-21, 2009 in Antalya, Türkiye.

43. The 19th COM approved establishment of the ECO-VECO in Tehran as a Specialized Agency of ECO. The Council also approved the Statute of ECO-VECO and decided to submit it for signature/ratification by the Member States. After the 19th COM, the Head of Veterinary Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO Secretariat had consultations for early activation of ECO-VECO. The 22nd RPC, while recalling the relevant decision of 19th COM to establish ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO) in Tehran as a Specialized Agency of ECO, requested the Member States to sign/ratify its Statute. So far, only Iran and Afghanistan have signed and ratified it.

44. The 3rd ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations Meeting held on October 6-8, 2018, in Tehran finalized/approved the Work Plan regarding priority activities of the ECO-VECO for 2019-24 prepared by the Veterinary Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran and welcomed the proposal of the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the first Technical Committee Meeting in their respective country.

45. The Secretariat initiated a small-sized project namely, "Establishment of standardized ECO network of Slaughter Houses and Reference Laboratories" regarding provision of food security in the region. The draft study reflecting the harmonized regulatory framework, making health certification for animal related products and market integration in the ECO region was circulated among Member States for their views and comments through the Note Verbale No. Agriculture/SH Project/676 dated June 27, 2021.

46. The First Technical Committee Meeting for implementation of the Work Plan of the priority activities of the ECO-VECO was held by the Republic of Azerbaijan virtually on November 15, 2022. The report of the meeting along with the updated Work Plan were circulated among Member States through the NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECO-VECO/2022/1616 dated November 24, 2022.

47. The ECO Secretariat requested the Member States to consider hosting the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations (NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECO-VECO/2023/368 dated March 16, 2023) and also the 2nd Technical Committee Meeting for implementation of the Work Plan of ECO-VECO in 2023 (NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECO-VECO/2023/421 dated March 30, 2023). Unfortunately, so far none of the Member States hasn't responded yet.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

48. The Council may request the Member states to consider hosting the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations and to ratify/sign the Statute of the ECO-VECO.

49. The Council, while appreciating the outcome of the small-sized project of "Establishment of standardized ECO Network of slaughter houses and reference laboratories", may recommend the Member States to implement the outcome of the project with close consultation of the ECO Secretariat to facilitate the smooth trans-boundary movement and trading animal and animal products economically.

50. The Council may request the Member states to consider hosting the 2nd Technical Committee Meeting for implementation of the Work Plan of the priority activities of ECO-VECO and cooperate on implementation of the subject Work Plan.

# Priority Area-4: Water Management

# 4.1. ECO Vision approach and target:

51. The ECO Vision 2025 envisages to achieve higher food security and safety in the region. Immediate steps are required to increase volumes, improve quality and decrease cost of production to satisfy the regional demand for food. This can be realized by increasing agricultural productivity via transferring and changing agro-technology, cooperating on agricultural research and extension, implementing right agro-policy reforms, increasing human capital productivity in the rural areas, optimum usage of natural resources (especially water) and benefitting from international trade in the ECO Region.

# 4.2. Background information and Recent Developments:

52. The 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture approved the establishment of the ECO Center for Efficient Utilization of Water as recommended by the Workshop held in Islamabad, and requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to prepare, in collaboration with Member States, the Secretariat, FAO and the other concerned international organizations, a project proposal for the establishment of the Center; and recommended to the CPR to allocate seed money for it from the ECO Feasibility Study Fund.

53. The 19th RPC welcomed the approval by the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture on the establishment of the ECO Centre for Efficient Utilization of Water in Pakistan and called on Member States for the support of its activities. The 144th CPR approved the proposal for the feasibility study in principle with allocation of seed money of 50,000 dollar from the ECO Feasibility Study Fund (February 2009).

54. The 1st Working Group Meeting on the Establishment of the ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Water Utilization for Agriculture (ECO-CEEWUA) was organized by the ECO Secretariat and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in Islamabad on August 2-4, 2010 in collaboration with Federal Water Management Unit, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. The IDB provided financial support for the meeting. As outcome of the meeting the basic documents for the Center i.e. draft Statute and draft Plan of Action were prepared. The Member States were requested to send their views and comments on the said basic documents.

55. The 19th COM approved establishment of the ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Water Utilization for Agriculture (ECO-CEEWUA) in Islamabad, Pakistan and called on the Member States to support its activities.

56. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan organized the 2nd Working Group Meeting on the Establishment of the ECO-CEEWUA on July 25-26, 2016 in Islamabad, Pakistan, in which the draft Plan of Action and draft Statute for establishment of the ECO-CEEWUA were finalized and circulated for views/comments of the Member States, for further submission to the COM through CPR for its final approval. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Türkiye submitted their views/comments on the draft Statute for establishment of the ECO-CEEUWA. The project, then will be send to FAO for conducting a feasibility study for the establishment of the Center and converting it into a bankable project. The bankable project will be submitted to IDB for financial process.

57. The Statute of ECO-CEEWUA shall enter into force 30 days after receiving the 5th instrument of ratification by the Secretary General of the ECO.

58. The 3rd Working Group Meeting for the Establishment of ECO-CEEWUA was held virtually on February 9, 2021 under the chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The amended draft Plan of Action and draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO-CEEUWA were circulated among Member States for their views/comments through the Note Verbal No. AI/2021/153 dated 16 February 2021. Since no views/comments were received from any Member States within the stipulated period of time, the forwarded draft Report, draft Plan of Action and draft Statute were considered as “FINAL” through the Note Verbal No. AI/2021/241 dated 7 March 2021.

59. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Member States to nominate national focal points/institutions for expediting the process for establishment of the Center thorough the NV No. A&I/Agriculture/CEEWUA/2023/379 dated March 19, 2023. To date, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan responded.

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# 4.3. Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

60. The Council may request the Member States (except Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan) to nominate national focal points/institutions and then create a network among their relevant organizations in order to expedite the process of Establishment of the ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Water Utilization for Agriculture (ECO-CEEWUA).

# Priority Area 5: Cooperation on Meteorological Issues

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

61. The ECO Vision 2025 has mandated the Secretariat and Member States to develop strategies, policies, plans and projects to contribute to the new development approach of the Region and sustainable development goal. In this regards, agriculture trade-related risk maps (abrupt price and supply changes because of trade and weather conditions) based on studies and analysis will be generated and finalized to identify hazards and their potential routes for being transferred.

# Background information and recent developments:

62. The 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations held on October 18-19, 2010. Likewise, the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations held on 12-13 November 2019 in Tehran, Iran.

63. The 19th COM approved establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC) in Ankara as an affiliated body of ECO and called on the Member States to extend support and cooperation to its activities.

64. The Republic of Türkiye prepared the draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC) and requested the Member States to send their views/comments on the said document, for finalization. The finalization of the said draft Statute would be considered during the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations. Since Türkiye informed that the draft Statute needs to be further worked on and improved, it was not considered during the said meeting. Following the 31st RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Republic of Türkiye to update the draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO-MCC through the Note Verbale A&I/ECO-MCC /2021/593 dated 6 June 2021.

65. The 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations and the Workshop/Training Course on Drought Monitoring and Seasonal Forecast in the ECO Region were held by the Islamic Republic of Iran in November 2019, in Tehran, Iran.

66. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat welcomed the proposal of the Republic of Türkiye to host the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations in 2023, requested the host authorities to send date and details of the meeting and the Member States to actively participate in this event thorough the NV No. A&I/Agriculture/ECO-MCC/2023/382 dated March 19, 2023.

67. In pursuance of the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat submitted the draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC), requested the Member States to send their views/comments on the said document, for finalization (NV. No. A&I/Agriculture/ECO-MCC/570 dated 2/5/2023). To date, only Tajikistan has responded.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

68. The Council, while appreciating the offer of the Republic of Türkiye to host the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations in 2024, may request the host authorities to send date and details of the meeting. The Council may urge the Member States to actively participate in this meeting.

69. The Council may request the esteemed Member States to convey their views/comments (except Tajikistan) on the draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC), for its early finalization.

# Priority Area-6: Agricultural Bio-technology Network

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# 6.1. ECO Vision approach and target:

70. The ECO Vision 2025 has mandated the Secretariat and the Member States to develop strategies, policies, plans and projects to contribute to the new development approach of the region and sustainable development goal in particular higher food security and safety in the region. Likewise, enhancement of capability of the participating research institutes and local communities for propagation and release of natural enemies of pests and diseases of the selected crops should be identified.

# Background information and recent developments:

71. The 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture held on 6-7 December 2004 Antalya, Türkiye welcomed and endorsed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a Network for Agricultural Biotechnology. The 4th Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture called on related international institutions for establishment of ECO Agricultural Bio-Technology Network and financial support for this network. The Council approved to allocate 50.000 USD from ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (ECO-FGPF) for establishment of ECO-ABN network in Iran. After completion of the project, ECO-ABN will continue to function as a regional agricultural biotechnology network under ECO.

72. Since the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture in 2012, the Secretariat pursued holding the 2nd Expert Group Meeting of ECO-ABN but it postponed several times due to the lack of quorum.

73. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Islamic Republic of Iran for conveying the exact date regarding hosting the Symposium on Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) Detection and Regulation and the 2nd Expert Group Meeting of the ECO Agricultural Bio-Technology Network (ECO-ABN) in 2024 (NV No. A&I/ECO-ABN/2023/465 dated April 6, 2023). Accordingly, the 2nd Expert Group Meeting of the ECO Agricultural Bio-Technology Network (ECO-ABN) and the Workshop on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) Bio-Safety and Regulation, held virtually by the Islamic Republic of Iran on October 24-25, 2023. The report of the meeting circulated among Member States.

74. In pursuance of the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat circulated the project proposal namely, “ECO Bio-Safety Capacity Building (ECO-BCB)” initiated by ECO Agricultural Biotechnology Network (ECO-ABN) for views/comments of the Member States (A&I/Agriculture/ECO-ABN/2023/1181 dated August 13, 2023). Only Türkiye sent its comment on it.

# 6.3. Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

75. The Council, while appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 2nd Expert Group Meeting of the ECO Agricultural Bio-Technology Network (ECO-ABN) and the Workshop on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) Bio-Safety and Regulation, may request the Member States to consider hosting the 3rd Expert Group Meeting of the ECO Agricultural Bio-Technology Network (ECO-ABN) in 2024.

76. The Council may request the ECO-ABN to update its website and may ask to enhance and expand its activities and communication with the Member States and also with the relevant international networks and organizations.

77. The Council may request the Member States to contribute to ECO Agricultural Bio-Technology Network with sharing information, studies, inputs, experiences and best practices and conveying/updating their country reports on agricultural biotechnology issues.

# Priority Area-7: Relations with Regional and International Organizations:

78. The Secretariat has maintained regular interactions with the international organizations on the basis of mutual interest, most notably with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UN World Food Programme, UN Food System Summits, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) with a view to identify/develop possible strategic partnership frameworks, to get their financial/technical support to ECO projects and initiatives, as well as to expand ECO’s outreach and visibility.

79. The Council may ask the Secretariat to pursue the cooperation policy and engagements with abovementioned organizations and other interested partners in the relevant fields, after consultation with the Member States and setting out further roadmap for proceeding on it.

80. The Council may recommend the Secretariat to invite representatives of abovementioned organizations and other interested partners to the relevant ECO events with a view to enhance cooperation for implementation of ECO Vision 2025.

81. The Council may appreciate the initiative of the Secretariat to prepare a draft Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and IOFS and may request Member States to support and cooperate on this issue.

# INDUSTRY SECTION

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

82. The ECO region is important in terms of industry. Being rich with natural mineral resources, industry is playing an important role in the overall economic development. In this context, Industry is one of the key sectors which can boost economic growth of the region through increasing productivity. Industry is one of the main drivers which bring nations to more prosperous and sustainable future. The ECO Vision 2025, has envisioned the strategic objective of achieving long term high level growth, knowledge and information through increasing contribution of research and development (R&D), entrepreneurship, involvement of private sector, increasing women contribution and activating SMEs in the Region

83. ECO Member Countries are at various degrees of industrialization. The extent of industrial and technological development particularly in the hi-tech arena is very limited in ECO region, thus requiring particular attention. Prevalence of natural, economic and human resources are among the advantages that make investment in industry, affordable and cost effective. However, different factors particularly lack of optimum knowledge of regional capacities, ambiguous regulations and fluctuating/complicated procedures are impeding factors. Furthermore, absence of national strategic policies toward an effective regional cooperation, ambiguity in defining the targets and objectives, skewed financing, non-involvement of women, lack of proper connectivity, regional sub-quality infrastructure and insufficient capacity for high-tech and new technologies are among the deficiencies for a rapid and cohesive industrial cooperation among the Member Countries. Industrial paradigm of the ECO Region needs to be readjusted as far as possible to contribute to the growth and productivity, while meeting the SDG's through adoption of relevant ‘standards and criteria’ and ‘establishment and enhancement of quality infrastructure’ in the Region. Involvement of the private sector in industrial cooperation is an indispensable obligation for promotion of regional interactions which require serious attention by the Member States.

# Priority Area-1: Policy Makers Cooperation on Industry

# ECO Vision approach and target:

84. The ECO Vision 2025 has mandated the Secretariat and Member States to develop strategies, policies, plans and projects to contribute to the new development approach of the Region and sustainable development goal in particular green industrial development. In this context, the Secretariat and the Member States are requested to revise and reformulate national and regional industrial development plans to adapt themselves to the ongoing global agenda.

# Background information and Recent developments:

85. The 1st Ministerial Meeting on Industry held in January 2004 in Tehran, adopted the Plan of Action for Industrial Cooperation in the ECO Region and provided the guidelines for cooperation of the Member States. In order to implement the Plan of Action on Industry and other relevant decisions, ECO organized the 2nd and 3rd Ministerial Meetings in November 2005 and 2006 in Istanbul and Lahore, respectively. Although there are concrete progresses in some areas, there is still a constant need to expedite the implementation of projects and programs in the field of industry and speed up adjustments to the requirements of global agenda for sustainable development.

86. Following recent RPCs, the Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 4th Ministerial Meeting preceded by 3rd High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Industry.

87. In pursuance of the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Council while appreciating the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 3rd HLEG Meeting on Industry back to back with the 5th Steering Committee meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development in 2023, requested the host country to submit the exact date and details of the events through the NV No. A&I/Industry/3rd HLEG/2023/391 dated March 20, 2023. Any response hasn't been received yet.

88. As per para 27 of the Work Program of 2023, the Secretariat requested the interested Member States to host the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Industry and inform the Secretariat the exact date and details, at the earliest, (NV No. A&I/Industry/2023/426 dated April 3, 2023), but unfortunately none of the Member States didn't submit the desire.

89. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Member States to take into consideration the ECO Vision 2025 in their decisions, consider enhanced implementation of new projects in Industry sector and organize the meetings to initiate the process of the development of the Green industrial development strategy at regional level through the NV No. A&I/Industry/2023/447 dated April 6, 2023. Any feedback hasn't been received.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

90. The Council, while appreciating the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 3rd HLEG Meeting on Industry back to back with the 5th Steering Committee meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development in 2024, may request the host authorities to send date and details of the events. The Council may urge the Member States to actively participate in the Meetings.

91. The Council may request the interested Member States to host the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Industry, which was also mentioned by Shusha Declaration, adopted by 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) held in Shusha, Azerbaijan on October 10, 2023, and inform the Secretariat the exact date and details, at the earliest.

92. The Council may recommend the Member States to take into consideration the ECO Vision 2025 in their decisions and devise necessary measures and projects to contribute to the expected objectives of the Vision. The Council also may propose to consider enhanced implementation of new projects in Industry sector.

93. The Council may recommend the ECO Member States to organize meetings to initiate the process of development of Green industrial development strategy at regional level in order to contribute to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

# Priority Area-2: Cooperation on Quality Infrastructure:

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

94. As per ECO Vision 2025, development of quality infrastructure, standards, laws and regulations are needed to make the region an investment friendly atmosphere for promoting ECO green industries and services in line with the industrial development.

# Background information and Recent developments:

95. The ECO Vision 2025 has mandated the ECO Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (ECO-RISCAM) to work for developing industrial standards and encouraging of green industries and services for the region.

96. The establishment of the ECO-RISCAM was approved at the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Industry in Lahore, Pakistan in 2008. Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology are the main pillars of quality infrastructure in successful economic regions. The Statute of ECO-RISCAM was approved by the 18th Council of Ministers (COM) along with the Road Map for its provisional implementation. The Secretariats of the Technical Management Boards (TMBs) of Standardization and Accreditation will be located in Türkiye, Metrology in Pakistan and Conformity Assessment in Iran. The official opening ceremony of the Central Secretariat of ECO-RISCAM and its Technical Management Board (TMB) of Conformity Assessment were held on 14 December, 2016 in Tehran, Iran.

97. As per the Article 17 of the Statute of the ECO-RISCAM, the Statute shall come into force after four signatory states have deposited their instruments of ratification by the ECO Secretary General/ECO Secretariat.

98. As per the 28th RPC Work Program, the Secretariat circulated the draft of updated ECO-RISCAM Roadmap and its Work Programme prepared by the Central Secretariat of ECO-RISCAM to the Member States for their comments. Türkiye has conveyed the views on 30 Sep 2018.

99. To date, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Türkiye signed and ratified the Statute of the ECO-RISCAM. Therefore, the Statute shall come into force upon ratification of 4 ECO Member States.

100. 7th and 8th High Level Working Group (HLWG) Meetings on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology were held virtually on 8 December 2020 and 26 October 2021, respectively. The report of the said meetings was circulated among Member States. Likewise, the 1th Joint Meeting on activation of four Technical Management Boards by Iran, Pakistan and Türkiye was held on 10 March 2021. Also, the 1th Meeting of Conformity Assessment Technical Management Board was held on 30 August 2021.

101. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Member States (except Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Türkiye) to sign and ratify the Statute of ECO-RISCAM to pave the way for early functioning of the Institute. Likewise, the Council appreciated Iran, Pakistan and Türkiye for submission the ratification of the Protocol Amending Article 5.4.1.10 of the Statute of ECO- RISCAM (NV No. A&I/Industry/ECO-RISCAM/2023/435 dated April 4, 2023).

102. As per para 31 of A&I Section of the Work Program of 2023, the Council requested the Republic of Türkiye and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to expedite establishment of Technical Management Boards (TMBs) of Standardization and Accreditation and Technical Management Board of Metrology of ECO-RISCAM, respectively, thorough the NV No. A&I/Industry/ECO-RISCAM/2023/433 dated April 4, 2023. Unfortunately, any response hasn't been received yet.

103. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Islamic Republic of Iran conveyed the date for hosting the First General Council Meeting of ECO-RISCAM in August 2023. Unfortunately, due to lack of confirmation by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the event postponed (NV No. A&I/Industry/ECO-RISCAM/2023/1117 dated August 1st, 2023). Also, the updated list of the TMBs of ECO-RISCAM circulated thorough the NV No. A&I/Industry/ECO-RISCAM/2023/1625 dated October 12, 2023.

104. In pursuance of the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Council urged the Member States (except Iran and Türkiye*)* to reflect their views and comments on the roadmap, work programme and basic documents of the Institute (i.e. Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Staff Regulations) thorough the NV No. A&I/Industry/ECO-RISCAM/2023/519 dated April 17, 2023. Any feedback wasn't received.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

105. The Council may request the Member States to sign and ratify (except Afghanistan, Iran, Türkiye and Pakistan) the Statute and Protocol Amending Article 5.4.1.10 of the Statute of ECO-RISCAM to pave the way for early functioning of the Institute.

106. The Council may request the Republic of Türkiye and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to expedite establishment of Technical Management Boards of Standardization and Accreditation and Technical Management Board of Metrology of ECO-RISCAM, respectively, and may convey the exact date and details for the first meetings of subject TMBs, at the earliest convenience.

107. The Council, while appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran for its proposal to host the First General Council Meeting of ECO-RISCAM, may request the host authorities to send date and details of the meeting. The Council may urge the Member States to actively participate in this event.

108. The Council may urge the Member States (except Iran and Türkiye) to reflect their view and comments on the roadmap and work programme for the ECO-RISCAM.

109. The Council may request the ECO-RISCAM to develop and implement measures and projects toward promoting green industrial development in line with ECO-Vision 2025 and contribute to the new growth paradigm in the region.

110. The Council, while appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 9th High Level Working Group (HLWG) in 2023, may request the Member States to actively participate in this meeting.

111. The Council may request the Member States to submit their views/comments (except the Republic of Tajikistan) in respect to the two project proposals namely; (i) Establishment of the Regional ECO/Green Labeling Systems and Preparation of Technical Requirements and Data Base for Finished Textile Products and (ii) Risk Management of Conformity Assessment Systems in International Trade by ECO Region Countries, Food Products for First Step and Building Materials for Second Step.

112. The Council may request the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Türkiye to hold workshops in the fields of Standardization, Accreditation, Conformity Assessment, and Metrology and may ask to send the exact dates and details of the events and the Member States to actively participate in the said workshops.

# Priority Area-3: Cooperation on Nanotechnology Network

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

113. The ECO Vision 2025 calls for green industrial development strategy and enhanced share of high-tech products for the Region and these objectives require particular attention in promoting Nanotechnology as one of the cutting-edge technologies.

# Background information and recent developments:

114. The 18th COM endorsed the Project on the Establishment of ECO Nanotechnology Network and it was launched by Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council (INIC) as coordinator, in Tehran on May 26, 2009. The website of ECO Nanotechnology Network was initiated under [www.econano.org](http://www.econano.org/). A Letter of Agreement between ECO Secretariat and INIC was signed for utilization of US$ 50,000 from the ECO Feasibility Study Fund. INIC also offered US$100,000 contribution to ECO-NANO.

115. The 1st ECO Steering Committee on establishment of ECO Nanotechnology Network (ECO-NANO) was held on 5 November 2009, in Tehran with some proposed programs. However, progress in this field requires further acquaintance of the Member States with the benefits and impact of this new technology in their contemporary life.

116. The Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a project titled “Pre-Feasibility Study of Removal of Arsenic Water Pollution” in ECO Region Using Nanotechnology Methods with the target of enhancing the regional cooperation in this field and operationalizing the ECO-NANO. The previous RPC meetings requested the Member States (except Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Türkiye) to submit their views and comments on the project in order to enhance regional cooperation in this field.

117. The previous RPC Meetings also requested the Member States to offer project proposals for the purpose of developing the Nanotechnology in the Region. The RPC Meeting appreciated the INIC for conducting a study project, which compiled in the booklet as the study of "Nano-Technology process in ECO Region" and updating ECO-NANO Website and requested Member States to send their views and information for uploading on the ECO-NANO website.

118. Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council (INIC) finalized the study project on the situation of Nanotechnology in the ECO region and provided the detailed cost break-down of the project in 2019 for allocation of the expenses from the relevant Feasibility Study Fund.

119. Although in the previous RPC Meetings, the Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for renewing its offer to host the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting on ECO Nanotechnology Network, and Workshop on Nanotechnology activities in the Region, this Meeting was pending due to lack of quorum. Regarding the importance of ECO Nanotechnology Network in the socio-economic growth of the ECO Member States, the Council requested INIC to furnish the Secretariat with exact date and details of hospitality and all Member States were also requested to actively participate in the Meeting and the Workshop.

120. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Islamic Republic of Iran for conveying the exact date regarding hosting the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting on ECO Nanotechnology Network in 2023, (NV No. A&I/Industry/2023/457 dated April 6, 2023). Accordingly, the 2nd Steering Committee on ECO Nanotechnology Network was held virtually by the Islamic Republic of Iran on July 10, 2023. The report of the meeting was circulated among Member States (NV No. A&I/Industry/Nanotechnology /2023 /1182 dated August 13, 2023).

121. During the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting on ECO Nanotechnology Network, two project proposals were raised and explained namely, "Facilitation on establishment of Nanobubble pilot plants for improving agricultural productivity" and "Establishment of a coordinating and facilitating platform for implementation of Nanotechnology based water treatment pilot/demo plants in ECO". After discussions, the participants agreed to focus on the second project proposal for implementation regarding its importance and necessity for the ECO Countries.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

122. The Council may appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting on ECO Nanotechnology Network on July 10, 2023.

123. The Council may request the Member States to consider hosting the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting on ECO Nanotechnology Network in 2024 and may urge the Member States to actively participate in this event.

124. The Council may encourage the Islamic Republic of Iran for updating the study project on the situation of NANO Technology in the ECO region.

125. The Council may request the Member States to convey their country reports toward this area of cooperation to the Secretariat and to ensure a more active involvement of their Nanotechnology related institutions in the ECO Nanotechnology Network.

126. The Council, while welcoming the project proposal namely "Establishment of a coordinating and facilitating platform for implementation of Nanotechnology based water treatment pilot/demo plants in ECO Region", may encourage the Member States to submit their Project Proposals on Nanotechnology issues and may invite the Member States to increase their cooperation in the field of new Nanotechnology projects.

# Priority Area-4: Industrial Property Rights

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

127. The ECO Vision 2025 underlines that Legal and administrative support for development of green industries particularly through promotion of Industrial Property Rights should be provided and necessary mechanism and national initiatives should be established and encouraged.

# Background information and recent developments:

128. 1st Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights (IPR) in ECO Region was held on 9 November 2012 in Ankara, Türkiye after the approval of its Plan of Action in the 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Industry (Lahore, 2006).

129. The 2nd and 3rd Coordination Committee Meetings on Industrial Property Rights (IPR) in ECO Region was held on 16 June 2014 in Baku and on 17-19 August 2015 in Tehran.

130. During the 27th and 28th RPC Meetings, Pakistan offered to host the 4th Coordination Committee meeting on Industrial Property Rights (IPR) and due to lack of quorum this event was postponed for twice, then Pakistan’s authorities announced that it would be difficult for them to reschedule the meeting once again for the third time.

131. As per the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 27th RPC meeting, Iran organized a Training Workshop on Industrial Property Rights for the Member States on 21-22 February 2017.

132. The Council appreciated the Intellectual Property Center of Iran (IPC), WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) and ECO for holding a virtual Regional Seminar on Geographical Indications’ (GIs) productions on 18 November, 2020.

133. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Member States to consider hosting the "4th Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights" in 2023 via the NV No. A&I/Industry/IPR/2023/434 dated April 4, 2023.

134. The Republic of Türkiye conveyed its readiness to host the 4th Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights in the last quarter of 2023 in Ankara. The Secretariat requested submission of the exact date and details of the meeting (NV No. A&I/Industry/IPR/2023/632 dated May 15, 2023), but any response wasn't received.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

135. The Council may request the Republic of Türkiye to convey the exact date and details for hosting the 4th Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights in 2023 and may encourage the ECO Member States to actively participate in this meeting.

# Priority Area-5: Development of SMEs & Entrepreneurships

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

136. The role of SMEs (Small & Medium Enterprises) in achieving sustainable economic growth and employment, raising standard of life of the grass root citizens and contribution to socio-economic development of the region is of high importance and directly contributes to the goals of the ECO and Millennium Development Goals of UN. Establishment of financial mechanism to support start-ups, SME’s and entrepreneurs as well as promotion and encouragement of women entrepreneurship are expected to be implemented to contribute to the ECO Vision 2025.

# Background information and recent developments:

137. During the 27th & 28th RPC Meetings, Pakistan offered to host the 5th HLWG on Entrepreneurship and SME Development Meeting in Pakistan. Pakistan informed to host the Meeting in 2017 and also on 16-17 Oct 2018 in Lahore, however Just Iran and Türkiye confirmed their participation in this Meeting and the Meeting was postponed due to lack of quorum.

138. The Republic of Türkiye was informed to host the Workshop on Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection in SMEs in 2017 and renewed its offer in 2018; however due to the provision of necessary information (details of hospitality) at belated stage from host, the Workshop was postponed.

139. During the 29th RPC, the Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 5th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development Meeting and SME Workshop back to back in 2019. ECO Secretariat through formal NVs requested from Member States to host the said events.

140. During the 31st RPC Meeting, the Islamic republic of Afghanistan conveyed its readiness to host the 5th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development Meeting in 2021. The Secretariat requested for the exact date and details through the Note Verbale No. A&I/Industry/ SME/2021/634 dated 13 June 2021, however no response has been received.

141. Following the 32nd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested the Member States to consider hosting the 5th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Development (A&I/Industry/SME/2022/290 dated March 6, 2022).

142. The Republic of Türkiye hosted the online workshop on “Sharing Best Practices on SME Support and Evaluation Mechanisms” on November 23, 2022. The report of the workshop was submitted via NV No. A&I/Industry/SME/2022/1656 dated December 4, 2022.

143. Following the 32nd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat intended to convene a virtual meeting of the experts and women entrepreneurs of the Member States on May 22, 2022 to develop an implementation action plan to promote and encourage women entrepreneurship in the region. The meeting postponed due to lack of quorum.

144. The Secretariat circulated the reports on strengthening the MSMEs of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Türkiye, regarding the 32nd RPC Meeting and requested other Member States to convey their relevant reports (A&I/Industry/SME/2022/1446 dated October 20, 2022).

145. In pursuance of the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Council while appreciating the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 3rd HLEG Meeting on Industry back to back with the 5th Steering Committee meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development in 2023, requested the host country to submit the exact date and details of the events through the NV No. A&I/Industry/3rd HLEG/2023/391 dated March 20, 2023. Any response hasn't been received yet.

146. Following the 33rd RPC Meeting, the Secretariat requested Iran to convey the exact date and details for hosting the First Expert Level Meeting on exploring possibilities of developing a financial mechanism aimed at supporting start-ups, SME’s and entrepreneurs in 2023. Also, the Secretariat requested for the country reports on strengthening the MSMEs, which only Azerbaijan sent the report (NV No. A&I/Industry/SME/2023/1159 dated August 9, 2023).

147. As per the para 50 of the Work Program of 2023, the Secretariat asked relevant authorities of Iran to reflect the exact date and details regarding the First ECO International Innovation and Technological Exhibition in 2023, but no feedback has been received (NV No. A&I/Industry/SME/2023/505 dated April 13, 2023).

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

148. The Council may request the Islamic Republic of Iran to convey the exact date for hosting the 5th Steering Committee meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development in 2024 and may request the Member States to actively participate in the event.

149. The Council may request the ECO Secretariat to encourage Member States to host expert level meetings on exploring possibilities of developing a financial mechanism aimed at supporting start-ups, SME’s and entrepreneurs, also while welcoming the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the First Expert Level Meeting on exploring possibilities of developing a financial mechanism aimed at supporting start-ups, SME’s and entrepreneurs, may request the relevant authorities to convey the details of the meeting.

# Priority Area-6: Privatization and Private Sector Development

1.

# 6.1. ECO Vision approach and target:

150. Privatization and private sector development is an essential part of economic policy reforms in the ECO member countries. The major shift in economic strategies towards free-market economies, increased emphasis on economic efficiency, private sector development, competition, the need for integration with global economy and increasing competitiveness have made the privatization an essential course of action in most developing countries and transition economies.

# 6.2. Background information and recent developments

151. The First Meeting of Heads of Privatization Administration of the ECO Member States was held on 3-6 July, 2004 in Tehran. The “6th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration” and the “5th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development” were held on 25-26 October, 2018 in Baku.

The Meetings considered:

* Progress report on Privatization
* ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) activities on Private Sector
* Privatization Applications in Energy Sector and Public-Private Partnerships
* Priority areas in the field of Privatization
* Role of Privatization in Foreign Direct Investment

152. Following the 29th RPC Meeting, the Council thanked Azerbaijan for hosting the “6th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration” and the “5th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development” on 25-26 October, 2018 in Baku.

153. Following 29th RPC, the Secretariat requested Kyrgyz Republic for conveying the date for hosting the "7th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration” and the “6th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development” in 2019, however no response has been received by the Secretariat.

154. During recent RPC Meetings, the Secretariat requested from Member States to host the “7th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration” and the “6th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development”.

# 6.3. Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

155. The Council may request the Member States to nominate their focal points along with the contact details for privatization and state property management issues.

153. The Council may request the interested Member States to consider hosting the “7th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration” and the “6th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development” in 2024. The Council may request the Member States to actively participate in the said Meetings**.**

# Priority Area-7: Relations with Regional/ International Organizations/ Agencies

1.

# ECO Vision approach and target:

156. According to the ECO Vision 2025, close cooperation with international organizations should be established. Member States may decide to instruct the Secretariat to expand bilateral cooperation with the relevant organizations through MoU or any other format in line with the mentioned goal and may recommend the CPR to allocate a sufficient budget to carry out activities in this regard.

# Background information and recent developments:

157. The A&I Directorate of the ECO Secretariat has established relations with World Intellectual Property Rights Organization (WIPO) and the MoU between ECO & WIPO was signed on 22 Jan 2018. This MoU covers various areas of cooperation with regard to Industrial Property Rights and will help capacity building in the Region. As per Article 5 of the MOU, both organizations nominated its representatives as focal points. As per Article 4 of the MOU, the Draft work program for MoU implementation was prepared by ECO Secretariat and sent to Member States on 22 February 2018 for their views. Just Azerbaijan has yet responded to ECO NV with no comments on the document. The other Member States are expected to submit their views on the Draft work program if any.

158. For finalizing the work program, there was a coordination Meeting between AIT Directorate of ECO Secretariat and representative of WIPO on May 1, 2019 in ECO headquarters in Tehran. Also according to the Para 4 of Article 3 of the MOU between WIPO and ECO, regarding mutual cooperation, a Regional Seminar on Geographical Indications (GIs) was held in Tehran on 18 November, 2020with cooperation of the Intellectual Property Center of Iran (IPC), WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) and ECO.

159. A bilateral meeting between ECO Secretariat and WIPO delegation headed by Mr. Andrew Michael Ong, Director of Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific from World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) was held 12 September 2023, at the ECO Secretariat. WIPO suggested to hold a regional conference from the intellectual property organizations of the Member States, which the successful and best practices of IP systems can be shared. Likewise, both sides emphasized on the necessity for updating the draft work program for implementation of the MOU between two parties.

# Expected outcomes for 2024 and Secretariat’s recommendations:

160. The Council may appreciate the Secretariat for active follow-up of MoU between ECO & WIPO and may request the Member States to cooperate actively on this issue.

161. The Council may request the Secretariat to initiate/intensify cooperation with international and regional organizations, such as United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to get their financial/technical support.

# Draft Calendar of Events for 2024

*(Subject to revision and approval by the 34th RPC)*

**AGRICULTURE & INDUSTRY**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Event/Activity** | **Venue** | **Date** |
|  | 8th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 7th High Level Experts Meeting on Agriculture | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 5th Steering Committee Meetings of the ECO Regional Coordination Centre (ECO-RCCFS) for Implementation of the ECO-RPFS | Türkiye | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 8th ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) International Trade Conference and Fair ECO Expert Meeting on Seed | Baku, Azerbaijan | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations | Türkiye | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 3rd EGM on Establishment of ECO-ABN | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations (ECO-VECO) | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 2nd Technical Committee Meeting for implementation of the Work Plan of ECO-VECO | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting  on Industry | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 3rd High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Industry | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | First General Council Meeting of ECO-RISCAM | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | Workshop in the field of ECO-RISCAM activities | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | Workshop in the fields of Standardization, Accreditation, Conformity Assessment, and Metrology | Pakistan | 2024(TBD) |
|  | Workshop in the fields of Standardization, Accreditation, Conformity Assessment, and Metrology | Türkiye | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 4th Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights | Türkiye | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 3rd Steering Committee Meeting on ECO Nanotechnology Network | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 5th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development Meeting | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | First Expert Level Meeting on exploring possibilities of developing a financial mechanism aimed at supporting start-ups, SME’s and entrepreneurs | Iran | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 7th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | 6th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development | TBD | 2024(TBD) |

# Non-ECO Events

*(Subject to availability of financial resources)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Event/Activity** | **Venue** | **Date** |
|  | The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | General Session of UNIDO& Bilateral Meeting with UNIDO Authorities | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | COMCEC Agriculture Working Group Meeting | TBD | 2024(TBD) |
|  | Food Security related regional and international events i.e. FAO, WOAH, OIC, IDB and D8-Organization for Economic Cooperation (D8).  | TBD | 2024(TBD) |

1. - Third Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO-RCCFS [http://ecorccfs.org/en/news-about-eco-rccfs/3rd-steering- committee-meeting/11ea27ea-20a8-4e8b-8e68-b94f7b8faad0/7122c91d-d832-42cb-8cd8-2e0d39544721](http://ecorccfs.org/en/news-about-eco-rccfs/3rd-steering-committee-meeting/11ea27ea-20a8-4e8b-8e68-b94f7b8faad0/7122c91d-d832-42cb-8cd8-2e0d39544721) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. - ECO-RCCFS Data & Statistics <http://ecorccfs.org/en/data-statistics/03562ed3-0358-4648-8f62-90d4bca9e14d> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. - Overview of Food Security in the Countries of ECO, 2019 <http://ecorccfs.org/en/eco-publications/overview-of-food-security-in-the-countries-of-eco/33616570-a96f-4e23-98e5-d0ee225ac866/99a0be2a-07ea-4eb9-92ff-11d90fd9ba30> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. - <https://www.eco.int/news/88347-6th-ECO-Ministerial-Meeting-on-Agriculture-3-4-December-2019-Baku-Azerbaijan.html?t=News> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)