



NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
UZBEKISTAN



Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO

## CONCEPT PAPER

### 6<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

under the overarching theme

“New Horizons for Enhanced Regional Environmental Action  
through Collaborative Solutions”

Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan - 3 June 2026

(Preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting - 2 June 2026)

#### 1. A Strategic Imperative for Regional Cooperation

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) stands at a pivotal moment. The escalating triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution transcends national borders, demanding a collective and decisive regional response. Our shared geography binds our nations together, making transboundary cooperation not just beneficial, but essential. Environmental degradation in one Member State can swiftly become a vital security, economic, and humanitarian challenge in another. This interdependence underscores the critical need for enhanced regional governance, collaborative policy-making, and shared innovation to safeguard our common future.

ECO is among the regions that are most vulnerable to multiple environmental challenges. Its Member States, while diverse in their economic profiles and development stages, face a common set of intensifying environmental pressures:

- **Climate Vulnerability:** The region is a hotspot for climate impacts, including water scarcity, extreme weather events, desertification and glacial melt, directly threatening water, energy, and food security.

- **Ecosystem Degradation:** The loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and land degradation are eroding natural capital, undermining livelihoods, and increasing vulnerability to disasters.
- **Transboundary Environmental Risks:** Shared river systems, air sheds, and marine environments mean that national actions have regional consequences, creating both risks and opportunities for cooperative management.

While national action plans are essential, their effectiveness is magnified when aligned with a cohesive regional strategy. ECO needs more inclusive and effective multilateralism and reinvigorating regional cooperation. The ECO region possesses immense potential to leverage its collective strength. This envisions strategic engagement with global partners, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to promote a regional decarbonisation agenda, foster green development, energy transition and sustainable resource management while gradually advocating a circular economy. Proactive participation in international platforms like COPs of international environmental conventions, International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum, Global Zero Waste Forum, and the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana to advance the regional environmental and green transition agenda and build a collective voice is instrumental to keeping this process intact.

## **2. Towards a Common Vision on Environment**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting is strongly aligned with the vision, anchors and strategic objectives of “ECO Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2035”, while representing an enabler of its policy focus and multiple expected outcomes. This strategic document highlights the enhancement of environmental protection, resilience and shift to a low-carbon development model as its priority area and policy focus.

This Ministerial Meeting is strategically designed to achieve the following key goals, building on the momentum of regional diplomacy, including the significant Regional Ecological Summit in Astana (April 2026), which serves as a pivotal mid-year milestone for aligning our regional ambitions:

- **Conduct a Shared Stock Taking:** Foster a collective assessment of the current and projected environmental state of the ECO region, identifying critical gaps, vulnerabilities, and emerging opportunities. This will incorporate insights from ongoing collaborations with partners like UNIDO and initiatives like the Zero Waste Forum.
- **Catalyze Knowledge and Innovation:** Serve as a premier platform for exchanging proven solutions, scientific research, and technological innovations. ECO needs strong science and societal engagement to craft inclusive and transformative solutions to ensure a multidimensional and responsive approach. This includes scaling up best practices in resource efficiency and circular economy models championed by our regional engagements. The High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, initiated by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, also fits well into this goal by bringing together all relevant stakeholders for brainstorming.
- **Strengthen Regional Coordination:** Advance and formalize a robust framework for ongoing collaboration, with a focus on finalizing and adopting the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment and its thematic annexes, ensuring it is synergistic with outcomes from Astana and other key forums.
- **Mobilize Commitment and Resources:** Galvanize high-level political will and explore means of implementation, in particular innovative mechanisms for financing regional environmental initiatives, capacity-building programs, and joint projects, leveraging partnerships to maximize impact.

### 3. A Pathway from Deliberation to Decision

The 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting is convened to translate political will into concrete, actionable outcomes. The process is designed for efficiency and decisive outcomes:

- **Day 1: Senior Officials Meeting (2 June 2026):** Technical-level experts will convene to conduct a detailed review of all substantive agenda items. Their mandate is to resolve technical issues, refine texts, and forge consensus to present a clear set of actionable documents and precise recommendations for ministerial adoption.
- **Day 2: Ministerial Meeting (3 June 2026):** Navigating the consolidated work and recommendations of the SOM, Ministers will provide high-level political

guidance and formally adopt the key deliverables. This session is the final sectoral decision-making forum.

#### 4. Objectives: A Focus on Implementation

The meeting is singularly focused on achieving the following concrete objectives:

**a. Operationalize the Core Framework:** Formally adopt the ready-to-implement ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) and its actionable Thematic Work Programs on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

**b. Drive Ongoing Initiatives:** Mandate the next steps for the High-Level Dialogue Platform and the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy (RESCUE), focusing on implementation financing and tangible results.

**c. Solidify Regional Consensus:** Issue the outcome document as "Samarkand Declaration/Communiqué on Regional Environmental Cooperation" as a unified political statement of our commitment to action.

#### 5. A Call for Action-Oriented Contributions

To ensure tangible progress, Member States are strongly encouraged to focus their interventions and proposals on implementation within the current frameworks and address:

- **Concrete Plans for Implementation:** How your country will contribute to or implement the specific activities in the draft Work Programmes on Climate Change and Biodiversity.
- **Resource Commitments:** Specific expertise, technical assistance, or financial resources your country can pledge/commit to advance the RESCUE Initiative or the High-Level Dialogue Platform.
- **Actionable Recommendations:** Practical suggestions to strengthen the draft Cooperation Framework and its annexes to ensure they are effective and results-oriented.
- **Focused agenda:** The priority will be on discussions that enhance and accelerate our existing, collectively-built frameworks. While new initiatives

may be presented, the core goal is to consolidate and execute our agreed-upon work plan. This is critical in terms of focusing the ECO's resources on major ongoing and prospective initiatives that would demonstrate its robustness and resilience as a whole. Through contributing to the existing endeavours, ECO may thereby find its niche based on the realistic re-assessment of its advantages in this complicated regional environment landscape, while avoiding overlaps and duplications.

## 6. Provisional Agenda and Expected Deliverables

The agenda is structured to facilitate this decisive action. The key expected deliverables from the Ministerial Meeting are:

- Adopted ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) and its Thematic Annexes
- Adopted outcome document (For instance: **Samarkand Declaration/ Communiqué on Regional Environmental Cooperation**)
- Clear implementation mandates for ongoing initiatives
- Adopted Report of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting

## 7. Participation and Logistics

**Host:** National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan

**Venue:** Samarkand, Uzbekistan

### Targeted Participation:

- **Senior Officials Meeting (2 June):** Open to technical experts and senior officials.
- **Ministerial Meeting (3 June):** Open to Ministers/Heads of environmental authorities.\*

*\* The host country may also extend invitations to representatives of pertinent international partners, upon concurrence from the relevant ECO decision making body.*

**Action Requested:** To facilitate the whole process, Member States are encouraged to submit any proposal on the provisional agenda and expected deliverables via official

notification to the ECO Secretariat by 15 April 2026. Delegates are also requested to confirm their participation and convey the list of participants the latest by 1 May 2026.

**For further coordination, please contact the designated focal points:**

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