

## ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030)

### Preamble

The Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

**Acknowledging** the vital role of a healthy environment for life on Earth, human well-being, and sustainable economic development; and that some human activities in the ECO Region have raised serious environmental challenges, making conservation and sustainable management a core regional priority;

**Recognizing** the critical importance of biodiversity for sustaining all life on Earth, and **Committed to** contributing to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's goal of "living in harmony with nature by 2050";

**Emphasizing** the urgency of fostering sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development to address the climate change challenge;

**Alarmed** by the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, which exacerbate desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity in our often arid and vulnerable region, and **Guided** by the findings of the UNCCD Global Land Outlook (2022);

**Inspired** by the ECO Vision 2025 objective to "increase the standard of living, quality of life, economic welfare and well-being of our people" through environmental preservation, which requires concerted action to tackle common challenges;

**Building** upon the Foundation of the Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2016-2020) and the decisions of the 6<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in Samarkand in 3 June 2026;

Have agreed to promote the following Cooperation Framework on the Environment for the ECO Region:

### Article 1: Objectives

The Member States agree to promote synergies and coordinate efforts to achieve the following objectives:

- 1.1. To strengthen regional cooperation for environmental protection, enhancing the ECO's role through coordinated actions at all levels, as appropriate, supported by a robust monitoring and review mechanism among the relevant bodies within the ECO.
- 1.2. To mainstream biodiversity conservation, its sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources into regional and national development policies.
- 1.3. To integrate low-carbon and climate-resilient development approaches into policies and strategies, boosting financial and technical assistance for mitigation, adaptation, and green growth.
- 1.4. To combat land degradation, desertification, and sand and dust storms by facilitating cooperation on long-term solutions, sustainable land management, and drylands restoration.
- 1.5. To enhance actions by all sectors of society, including governments, indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society, and the private sector, in support of global environmental goals.
- 1.6. To realize the environmental sustainability objectives of ECO Vision 2025 through enhanced regional cooperation.

## **Article 2: Implementation and Institutional Arrangements**

- 2.1. Two Expert Groups on Biodiversity and Climate Change, composed of focal points from Member States, shall be established to coordinate the implementation of the annexed Work Programs.
- 2.2. The ECO Secretariat shall facilitate communications, meetings, and documentation, and will develop a light-touch Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework with clear indicators to track progress.
- 2.3. Member States are invited to submit on a voluntary and biennial basis, relevant information, and updates to the ECO Secretariat. The Secretariat can facilitate the exchange of information and prepare a consolidated overview of regional development to be shared for information purposes.

## **Article 3: Resource Mobilization**

The Member States, in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat:

- 3.1. Agree to consider the possibility to develop a dedicated Resource Mobilization Strategy to secure financial and technical resources for the Framework's implementation. This strategy will prioritize:

- Leveraging existing regional and international financial mechanisms (e.g., the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund).
- Engaging with regional development banks, international donors, and the private sector.
- Exploring other options to fund flagship regional initiatives.

#### **Article 4: Thematic Areas of Cooperation**

Member States agree to encourage and facilitate cooperation in the following thematic areas, with specific indicative activities detailed in the Annexes on Biodiversity and Climate Change:

##### 4.1. Natural Environment:

- Land: Promote integrated spatial planning, especially in drylands.

##### 4.2. Human Environment:

- Energy: Develop strategies for energy efficiency, renewable energy investment, regional power trade.
- Settlements: Enhance urban and rural resilience through improved waste management, air and water quality, disaster risk response, and green infrastructure.
- Industry: Encourage responsible industrial practices to reduce pollution and advance low-carbon, circular business models, including zero-waste approaches.

##### 4.3. Cross-Cutting Priorities:

- Planning: Implement and update National Action Plans for biodiversity and climate change.
- Health & Food Security: Promote ecosystem-based approaches for health protection and climate-smart agriculture for food security.
- Circular Economy: Foster a shift to a circular economy by integrating green financing and incentive measures into all economic sectors.

##### 4.4. Mainstreaming Actions:

- Data and Information: Strengthen mechanisms for environmental data collection and exchange.
- CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness): Encourage capacity-building, technology transfer, joint research, and the inclusion of traditional knowledge.

- Participatory Approach: Engage all relevant stakeholders.
- Global Collaboration: Enhance coordination with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including through preparatory meetings for COPs to develop common regional positions where appropriate.

### **Final Provisions**

This Framework is a voluntary instrument of regional cooperation and is not intended to create legally binding rights or obligations under international law. (The specific activities outlined in the Annexes [Annex 1: Work Program on Climate Change; Annex 2: Work Program on Biodiversity] are for further consideration and implementation by Member States according to their national capacities, priorities, and legislation.)

## Annex I: ECO Work Program on Climate Change (2026-2030)

### **Preamble:**

The Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

**Guided** by the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement as the foundational framework for global climate action;

**Acknowledging** that the climate challenge has implication for sustainable development, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable regions, including many within ECO, exacerbating water scarcity, food insecurity, and ecosystem degradation;

**Recognizing** the dual challenge of recovering from the socio-economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic while addressing the urgent need for a systemic shift towards a green, resilient, and inclusive development model;

**Building upon** the legacy of the “Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2016-2020)” and inter-governmentally agreed outcomes of recent UNFCCC COPs;

**Emphasizing** the critical importance of regional cooperation in enhancing ambition, sharing knowledge, pooling resources, and developing a strong, unified voice in global climate negotiations as appropriate;

Hereby adopt this voluntary Work Program on Climate Change to accelerate collective action for a sustainable future in the ECO Region.

### **1. Strategic Objectives**

This Work Program aims to:

- 1.1. **Mainstream Climate Action:** Integrate ambitious, low-carbon, and climate-resilient approaches into all relevant regional, national, and sub-national policies, plans, and development strategies.
- 1.2. **Enhance Implementation & Cooperation:** Foster synergies and coordinated action among Member States to implement regional priorities, supported by harmonized standards, regular monitoring, and knowledge exchange.
- 1.3. **Mobilize Finance & Investment:** Catalyze public, private, and international financial flows and technical assistance towards mitigation and adaptation projects, prioritizing just transitions and green recovery.

- 1.4. **Build Systemic Resilience:** Strengthen the adaptive capacity of communities, economies, and ecosystems to withstand current and future climate impacts, with a focus on the most vulnerable.
- 1.5. **Empower Broader Society:** Enable actions by all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities, and youth.

## 2. Implementation and Governance

- 2.1. **Expert Group on Climate Change (EGCC):** Composed of national focal points, the EGCC will be the primary technical body for steering implementation, reviewing progress, and proposing adaptive management of this Work Program. It will meet at least annually.
- 2.2. **Coordinating Role of the ECO Secretariat:** The Secretariat will facilitate the EGCC's work, coordinate cross-sectoral collaboration, support reporting, and act as a liaison with international partners and agreements.
- 2.3. **Technical Support:** Implementation will be supported by relevant ECO agencies and institutions, including but not limited to the ECO Specialized Agencies in the fields of energy, agriculture, and disaster risk reduction, as well as through partnerships with accredited regional and international scientific bodies for capacity-building, technology transfer, joint research, and knowledge management.
- 2.4. **Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL):** A light-touch MEL framework with clear, agreed-upon indicators will be established. Member States are encouraged to submit voluntary biennial progress summaries. The Secretariat will synthesize these into a regional progress report shared learning.

## 3. Resource Mobilization Strategy

To translate ambition into action, ECO Member States, with support from the Secretariat, agrees to:

3.1. **Developing a Joint Resource Mobilization Plan:** This plan will identify priority projects and map them onto potential funding sources, including:

- International Climate Finance (Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund).
- Multilateral and Regional Development Banks.
- Bilateral donor agencies.
- Private sector investment and blended finance mechanisms.

**3.2. Exploring an ECO Climate Project Pipeline:** Creating a vetted portfolio of bankable regional and national projects to attract larger-scale investment.

**3.3. Strengthening National Enabling Environments:** Supporting policy and regulatory reforms to de-risk and incentivize green investments.

#### **4. Priority Areas for Action**

Member States are encouraged to collaborate and advance actions within the following interconnected pillars, tailoring them to national contexts:

##### **Pillar A: Planning & Enabling Environment**

**A.1. Enhanced NDCs & Long-Term Strategies:** Support the formulation and implementation of increasingly ambitious and actionable Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS).

**A.2. Climate Governance:** Strengthen institutional, legal, and policy frameworks for integrated climate action, including effective carbon pricing, subsidy reform, and green fiscal policies.

**A.3. Green and Circular Economy:** Foster a systemic shift by mainstreaming circular economy principles and green growth strategies into economic recovery plans and sectoral policies, including through the promotion of the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE).

##### **Pillar B: Mitigation and Low-Carbon Transition**

**B.1. Energy Transition:** Accelerate the deployment of renewable energy, enhance regional energy connectivity and trade, improve energy efficiency across all sectors, and advanced efforts to reform inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

**B.2. Sustainable Transport:** Promote fleet modernization, fuel switching to low-carbon alternatives, electrification of transport, and investment in high-quality public transit and non-motorized infrastructure.

**B.3. Industry & Cities:** Drive industrial decarbonization through innovation, energy efficiency, and sustainable supply chain management. Support cities in implementing integrated urban planning for low-carbon, resilient, and livable communities (e.g., green buildings, sustainable waste management).

**B.4. Sustainable Land Use & Food Systems:** Promote climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forest management, and food value chain interventions that reduce emissions, enhance carbon sinks, and improve food security.

### **Pillar C: Adaptation & Resilience**

**C.1. Climate & Health:** Develop early warning systems and preparedness plans for climate-sensitive health risks (e.g., heat waves, vector-borne diseases).

**C.2. Ecosystem-based Adaptation:** Protect, restore, and sustainably manage natural ecosystems (mountains, drylands, and coastal zones) as critical infrastructure for resilience.

### **Pillar D: Cross-Cutting Support**

**D.1. Data, Knowledge & CEPA:** Facilitate regional climate data sharing, best practices, and technologies driven by the World Meteorological Organization Standards. Implement robust Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) programs, respecting and integrating Traditional Knowledge (TK).

**D.2. Inclusive Participation:** Encourage the participation of relevant stakeholders, including sub-national authorities, indigenous peoples, local communities, and the private sector, on climate-related dialogues.

**D.3. Global & Regional Solidarity:** Enhance coordination in international forums, including through pre-COP regional consultations, to share experiences and develop common positions where feasible, amplifying the ECO region's voice.

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This Work Program shall be reviewed periodically by the Expert Group on Climate Change to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in light of scientific developments and evolving global commitments.

## Annex II: ECO Work Program on Biodiversity (2026-2030)

### Preamble:

The Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

**Recognizing** that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are the foundation of life on Earth, underpinning human well-being, cultural identity, and sustainable development across the ECO Region;

**Acknowledging** the rich and unique biological heritage of the ECO Region, encompassing diverse mountain ranges, vast drylands, inland waters, coastal zones, and marine environments that provide essential ecosystem services to our peoples;

**Guided** by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted at COP-15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada (December 2022), which sets an ambitious pathway towards the 2050 Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature" through its four goals and 23 action-oriented targets for 2030;

**Building** upon the foundation of the previous Work Plan on Biodiversity in the ECO Region (2016-2020) and the outcomes of relevant regional consultations;

**Emphasizing** that achieving the 2030 targets of the Kunming-Montreal GBF requires enhanced approaches in economic, social, and financial paradigms, coupled with enhanced regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and collective action;

**Recognizing** the interlinkages between biodiversity conservation and other global challenges, including climate change, desertification, land degradation, and sustainable development;

Hereby adopt this voluntary Work Program on Biodiversity to guide coordinated regional action for the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of biodiversity in the ECO Region.

### 1. Strategic Objectives

This Work Program aims to:

- 1.1. Halt and Reverse Biodiversity Loss: Encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across the ECO Region, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, putting nature on a

path to recovery by 2030 in line with the Kunming-Montreal GBF targets.

- 1.2. **Mainstream Biodiversity:** Integrate biodiversity values and considerations into regional and national development policies, plans, and strategies across all sectors, including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, trade, and finance.
- 1.3. **Empower All of Society:** Encourage efforts by governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society, and businesses to contribute to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, its Protocols (Cartagena and Nagoya), and other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements.
- 1.4. **Strengthen Regional Cooperation:** Foster synergies and coordination among Member States for effective implementation of biodiversity activities at regional, national, and sub-national levels, supported by regular monitoring, reporting, and review mechanisms.
- 1.5. **Contribute to the 2030 Agenda:** Advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and related goals on food security, water, health, and climate action.

## **2. Implementation & Governance**

- 2.1. **Expert Group on Biodiversity (EGB):** Composed of national focal points from Member States, the EGB will serve as the primary technical body for steering implementation, reviewing progress, and proposing adaptive management of this Work Program. It shall meet at least annually.
- 2.2. **Coordinating Role of the ECO Secretariat:** The Secretariat will facilitate the EGB's work, coordinate cross-sectoral collaboration, support reporting, and act as a liaison with the CBD Secretariat and other international partners.
- 2.3. **Technical Support:** Implementation will be supported by relevant ECO institutions and specialized agencies, including those focused on agriculture, food security, trade, and science and technology, as well as through partnerships with regional and international scientific bodies, research institutions, and centers of excellence for capacity-building, technology transfer, joint research, and knowledge management.
- 2.4. **Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL):** A light-touch MEL framework aligned with the Kunming-Montreal GBF monitoring framework will be established. Member States are encouraged to submit voluntary biennial progress summaries. The Secretariat will synthesize these into a regional biodiversity progress report, shared learning, and information purposes.

### **3. Resource Mobilization Strategy**

To translate ambition into action, ECO Member States, with support from the Secretariat, agree to:

- 3.1. Supporting Member State Access to International Finance: Recognizing that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other international funds operate on a constituency basis, Member States will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to access available resources, including:
  - The GEF biodiversity focal area and its capacity-building initiatives for the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols.
  - The Kunming Biodiversity Fund and other international biodiversity finance mechanisms.
  - Bilateral donor agencies and development cooperation partners.
- 3.2. Leveraging Regional and Multilateral Development Finance: Engage with multilateral and regional development banks (e.g., Islamic Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) to secure financing for regional biodiversity projects and programs.
- 3.3. Developing an ECO Biodiversity Project Pipeline: Create a vetted portfolio of bankable regional and national projects to attract investment, including transboundary conservation initiatives, ecosystem restoration programs, and sustainable value chain development, for presentation to potential donors and financial institutions.
- 3.4. Strengthening National Enabling Environments: Support policy and regulatory reforms to remove perverse incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity, and to create positive incentives for conservation and sustainable use.

### **4. Priority Areas for Action**

Member States are encouraged to collaborate and advance actions within the following interconnected pillars, tailoring them to national contexts and aligning with the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

#### **Pillar A: Planning and Enabling Environment**

**A.1. Enhanced NBSAPs:** Support the updating and effective implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal GBF, ensuring integration of biodiversity into national development planning, poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral policies.

**A.2. Biodiversity Assessment and Valuation:** Enhance tools and methodologies for biodiversity assessment, ecosystem service valuation, and natural capital accounting to inform evidence-based decision-making and integrate biodiversity into national accounting systems.

**A.3. Policy Coherence and Incentives:** Promote policy reforms to align economic and regulatory incentives with biodiversity goals, repurpose subsidies harmful to biodiversity, and develop positive incentive measures for conservation and sustainable use.

## **Pillar B: Conservation & Restoration**

**B.1. Protected Areas and OECMs:** Strengthen national and transboundary protected area systems to ensure at least 30% of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed, recognizing the importance of biodiversity hotspots and ecological connectivity. Promote Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

**B.2. Ecosystem Restoration:** Support ecosystem restoration initiatives targeting degraded landscapes, including forests, wetlands, drylands, and coastal ecosystems, to enhance biodiversity, climate resilience, and ecosystem services.

**B.3. Species Conservation:** Implement active management measures for the conservation and recovery of threatened species, including through ex-situ conservation, reintroduction programs, and implementation of CITES provisions to ensure sustainable and legal wildlife trade.

**B.4. Invasive Alien Species:** Strengthen regional cooperation to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive alien species, with a focus on priority species and pathways, in line with Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal GBF.

**B.5. Marine and Coastal Biodiversity:** Take precautionary measures to safeguard and monitor marine and coastal ecosystems, including the Caspian Sea and other water bodies, addressing pollution, overfishing, and habitat degradation.

**B.6. Climate Change and Biodiversity:** Reduce the impact of climate change on biodiversity and contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, striving for net-positive impacts.

### **Pillar C: Sustainable Use and Benefit-Sharing**

**C.1. Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Land Management:** Promote sustainable management practices in agriculture, pastoralism, aquaculture, and forestry to enhance productivity, resilience, and biodiversity outcomes, including through agroecological approaches and sustainable forest management. Ensure integrated spatial planning for all landscapes, particularly in dry ecosystems, to address desertification, erosion, and sand and dust storms.

**C.2. Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS):** Develop and implement national and regional policies to ensure adequate access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, including the appropriate use of related traditional knowledge, in line with the Nagoya Protocol.

**C.3. Sustainable Value Chains and Business Engagement:** Promote sustainable extraction, production, sourcing, certification, and trade practices across supply chains to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services, encouraging private sector engagement through initiatives such as the ECO Green Award and business biodiversity pledges.

**C.4. Health and Biodiversity:** Improve nature's contributions to air, land, and water quality, protect people from severe natural occurrences, and enhance human health and well-being through biodiversity conservation and ecosystem-based approaches.

**C.5. Ecotourism:** Encourage responsible and sustainable ecotourism initiatives that support local communities, raise awareness of biodiversity values, and mitigate potential adverse effects on ecosystems.

### **Pillar D: Cross-Cutting Support**

**D.1. Data, Information and Knowledge Sharing:** Facilitate the establishment of regional mechanisms for biodiversity data sharing, and harmonization, including collaboration with the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism and national biodiversity information systems. Address potential risks of new technologies on biodiversity and human health, including through appropriate biosafety measures under the Cartagena Protocol.

**D.2. CEPA and Traditional Knowledge:** Strengthen Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) programs to enhance understanding of biodiversity values and engage all sectors of society. Respect, preserve, and integrate Traditional Knowledge (TK) and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

**D.3. Inclusive Participation:** Encourage the participation of all relevant stakeholders in biodiversity-related dialogues.

**D.4. Regional and Global Collaboration:** Enhance coordination and cooperation, in consultation with Member States with biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (including CITES, CMS, Ramsar, UNCCD and ITPGRFA) through inter-ministerial collaboration and regional consultation mechanisms. Strengthen regional preparatory processes for meetings of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) and other relevant forums to exchange best practices, lessons learned, and develop common positions where feasible, amplifying the ECO region's voice.

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This Work Program shall be reviewed periodically by the Expert Group on Biodiversity to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in light of scientific developments, evolving global commitments, and progress towards the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets.