

**BSEC ACTION PLAN  
FOR COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**The BSEC Member States:**

*Fully aware* of their responsibility to protect and preserve the environment for the benefit of present and future generations, aiming at sustainable development in the BSEC Member States,

*Acknowledging* the need for close cooperation among them based on the regional approach in a coordinated manner for the protection of their environment,

*Considering that* the aim of BSEC is to achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose of promoting economic, technological and social progress,

*Confirming* their commitment to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment in the BSEC Region,

*Recalling* the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution in 1992 and its Protocols,

*Appreciating* the progress that has been made towards protecting the Black Sea ecosystem and rehabilitating its marine and coastal environment through the actions taken by the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution for the implementation of the Bucharest Convention,

*Determined* to act within the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on Environment and Development (Rio Declaration) and Agenda 21 and in consistency with the framework, the priorities and the targets set by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as with relevant rules of international law, with a view to achieve progress in the protection of their environment,

**Have agreed as follows:**

**I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The BSEC Action Plan for Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection is a general framework to promote cooperation in the field of environment among the BSEC Member States. The Plan determines the main directions of environmental cooperation among the BSEC Member States.

The main objectives of the Plan are:

- to sustain the efforts of the BSEC Member States in achieving a clean and healthy environment and to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and to provide long term prosperity in the BSEC Region;
- to strengthen solidarity among the BSEC Member States in preserving their common heritage and resources for the benefit of present and future generations;
- to seek synergies and avoid duplication of efforts with other regional organizations and initiatives acting in the region, or in neighboring regions;
- to promote integration of environmental protection into the economic and social policies of the BSEC Member States;
- to protect the environment, including the preservation and the management of the natural resources, in line with the principles of sustainable development.

## **II. MAIN DIRECTIONS FOR COOPERATION**

Promoting incorporation of environmentally important approaches in the economic and social development;

Developing a harmonized environmental legislation in the BSEC Member States, based on the best practice and experience existing in the Pan-European region, taking into account the legislative framework of the European Union;

Improving the functioning of the institutional network of BSEC and the coordination with regional organizations, institutions and initiatives, in particular with the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution;

Strengthening cooperation in the Black Sea basin in pollution prevention and biodiversity conservation with particular attention to the areas not covered by the Bucharest Convention;

Promoting the use of economic incentives and tools in the field of the environmental protection in order to ensure funding for projects of mutual interest;

Promoting development of innovative, environmentally friendly and resource saving technologies;

Establishing a regional Clearing House Mechanism among the BSEC Member States.

## **III. PRIORITY FIELDS OF ACTIVITIES**

### **Regional Cooperation**

- Organize and support Meetings of the Ministers of Environment for the promotion of the cooperation at the highest decision-making level;
- Enhance the role of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection through:
  - a) *nominating* national focal points with participation of experts on environmental protection and economic legislation for coordinating the activities of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection;
  - b) *strengthening* the role of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat in the coordination of the activities of the Working Group at the regional level;
  - c) *organizing* regular meetings for the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection at least once a year. The draft agenda will be proposed by the Country-Coordinator;
  - d) *closely cooperating* with other relevant Working Groups in BSEC, such as: the Working Group on Energy and the Working Group on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance, as well as the Working Groups of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution;
  - e) *elaborating* and adopting Terms of Reference for the Working Group;
  - f) *exploring* ways of developing an Ecotourism Network in the BSEC region in coordination with the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, and if appropriate with other BSEC Working Groups;
  - g) *streamlining* the BSEC activities towards exploring investment programs directed at preservation of the region's environment, as well as the development of green technologies;
  - h) *seeking* ways of complementary cooperation with the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution;
  - i) *intensifying* the control of the transboundary spreading of dangerous substances in the environment of the BSEC region;
  - j) *providing* the mechanisms of integrated management of the rivers' ecosystems of international importance which are covered by the sphere of BSEC activities;
  - k) *carrying out* joint scientific-technical research and programs;
  - l) *elaborating* and executing cooperation projects;
  - m) *exchanging* scientific-technical information and documents;
  - n) *exchanging* officials, experts, researchers and members of non-governmental organizations;
  - o) *organizing* training programs, meetings, conferences and symposia;
  - p) *cooperating* in other issues of mutual interest.

### **International Cooperation**

The BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection shall cooperate with UNEP, the International Maritime Organization and with other related international organizations, with the Environment General Directorate of the European Commission (for example in relation to the EU Water Initiative) and other General Directorates of the Commission and with the similar type of regional institutions and organizations to discuss common concerns and to share experiences, good practice and knowledge in the achievement of the aim of this Plan.

### **Harmonization of Environmental Legislation**

The BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection shall regularly exchange information on the new developments in the environmental legislation and the progress towards protecting the environment with more strict regulations, taking into consideration the Water Framework Directive and other relevant EU directives.

### **Protection of the Black Sea Marine and Coastal Environment**

The BSEC Member States shall support the activities of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution in implementing the Bucharest Convention (1992) requirements on the protection of the Black Sea environment.

### **Environmental Education and Training**

The BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection shall explore the means to design appropriate joint environmental projects, programs, courses, workshops and scientific conferences, taking into consideration the framework of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

The BSEC Member States will offer technical level courses in the various related environmental fields.

The Member States are encouraged to disseminate in their territories the present Action Plan.

## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

The Working Group on Environmental Protection, as a permanent subsidiary organ of BSEC, shall monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and submit regular progress reports to the BSEC Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and to the Ministers of Environment of the BSEC Member States. The practical steps envisaged to that end include:

a) The Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Environmental Protection, in cooperation with the Chairman-in-Office and the support of BSEC PERMIS shall prepare a Work Program, to be presented for the consideration and appropriate action to the next Working Group meeting. The Work Program should include a list of ongoing and planned activities in the context

of the Action Plan, with contact details of persons and institutions in charge, provided by the BSEC Member States.

b) Whenever necessary and practical, upon the initiative of the Country-Coordinator and the Chairmanship-in-Office, an ad-hoc meeting of high level officials may be convened to assess the implementation of the Action Plan, to update the Work Program, to prepare an interim report for the Working Group meetings and to propose new activities.

c) The Working Group on Environmental Protection will engage, on a regular basis, in exchange of information and practical cooperation with other BSEC Working Groups in related spheres of activity in order to provide better coordination and to create synergies for the implementation of this Action Plan.

d) The European Commission shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Working Group on Environmental Protection in order to exchange views and create synergies between the Action Plan and the programs and financial instruments developed by the European Union in the field of the environmental protection.

## **V. REVISION OF THE ACTION PLAN**

The Action Plan is subject of revision by the Meetings of the Ministers in charge of Environmental Protection, to be endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States.

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