



# ECOSF NEWSLETTER



## 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) held in Hybrid Mode

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) was held from January 17-26, 2022. The Meeting held in hybrid mode because of the prevailing situation of COVID-19 pandemic, thus, the Meeting prolonged to two weeks. During the meeting, various sectoral committees discussed and considered their specific areas for making appropriate recommendations to the RPC.



The meeting was attended by the delegations Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. Moreover, the Representatives of the Turkish Cypriot State and Energy Charter attended the Meeting in the capacity of Observers. The ECO Secretary General along with the Deputies Secretary General and other relevant staff of the Secretariat, as well as the Representatives of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies also attended the Meeting. President ECOSF along with Scientific Officer, Assistant Director and Accounts Officer represented ECOSF in the Meeting.



The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri welcomed the participants and highlighted the significance of RPC in consideration of its essentially important role of analyzing and evaluating the Organization's ongoing activities as well as considering and developing some new projects and programs to be implemented to shoulder, support and continue the regional development process. Despite the post-pandemic challenges, the ECO Secretariat managed to convene several important meetings in 2021, both in virtual/hybrid and physical formats, added the Secretary General. Moreover, the Secretary General congratulated the Republic of Uzbekistan for assuming the Organization's Chairmanship for 2022, assuring his complete support and cooperation to ensure the implementation of any initiatives by Uzbekistan which are aimed at maintaining and accelerating the Organization's performance for smooth socioeconomic progress in the region.

Being the Organization's Chair, the Meeting was chaired by Mr. Ashraf Khodjaev, Director of the Department of Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Mr. Khodjaev welcomed the participants and thanked them for joining the Plenary Session of the 32nd RPC to consider, review and finalize the ECO's Work Program and Calendar of Events-2022. Expressing deep pleasure over the first-time assumption of ECO's Chairmanship by the Republic of Uzbekistan, he assured that his country is well-determined to effectively meet the assigned responsibility for further strengthening regional cooperation within the ECO framework.

Prof. Soomro made the statement of ECOSF in the meeting. In his statement, he said that the entire world has been facing challenges due to deadly COVID-19, although situation is improving but it is not yet back to normal. Hence, the pandemic has not only raised the expectations we have of science, but it has also emphasized the fact that stronger collaboration & cooperation among nations to develop scientific solutions towards this global challenge, is much needed. Therefore, collaboration across scientists and experts is a powerful way of bringing evidence and scientific consensus to the attention of policymakers to make informed decisions grounded in the evidence-based research. This lies at the core of values & principles that ECOSF was established for. President ECOSF also shared the progress of the Foundation made during the year 2021.

Prof. Soomro further said that he is personally and on behalf of the Foundation, grateful to the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan for signing the Host Country Agreement in December 2021, thereby making it possible for staff from other Member Countries to join ECOSF in Islamabad. He hoped that his successor from I.R. of Iran Prof. Syed Komail Tayebi would join soon and wished him all the best. He also said that this also means that this RPC meeting is going to be his last meeting; hence he personally thanked all the Member States and the Secretary General, the past four Secretaries General of ECO as well as the Scientific Community of the region & ECO Secretariat staff for their continuous support in establishing the organization and running it for the last over eight years. He also made sincere appreciation to ECOSF's small but dedicated and able team for their efforts and support in his endeavours as the Founder President.



The Council appreciated and thanked the ECO Secretary General and his team for making necessary arrangements for successful holding 32nd meeting of RPC and preparation of relevant documents. The Council concluded the meeting with a vote of thanks to the Chair for managing the meeting in a proactive, smooth, and efficient manner. The Council also acknowledged and thanked the Chairmen of various Sectoral Committees for successfully conducting their tasks.

**ECOSF contributed to the Asian Research Policy (ARP) Journal in its latest publication on Achieving Carbon Neutrality 2021**

ECOSF is pleased to have contributed to the Asian Research Policy (ARP) Journal and published a research article on "[Decarbonizing Road Transport Sector in Pakistan through E-Mobility](#)". The theme for ARP latest volume was 'carbon neutrality,' as climate crisis is and will be the main concern of international organizations and governments of many countries for the next half century. In addition, ARP also featured the [profile of the ECOSF as the catalyst for promoting Science, Technology, and](#)

[Innovation \(STI\)](#), which highlighted key strategic programmes of the Foundation to bring meaningful impact based on STI in the ECO region.



The article on *“Decarbonizing the Road Transport Sector in Pakistan”* by ECOSF underscores that road transport sector in Pakistan relies heavily on fuel imports; hence it takes a heavy toll on Pakistan’s fuel import bill. Pollution in major cities has reached alarming levels. Apparently, Pakistan currently faces a power surplus crisis. Increased EVs penetration could serve as a productive power demand to achieve adequate level of utilization of existing power capacity and bring down unit cost of electricity. Electrification of transportation is one of the effective means to reduce energy intensity in the road transport sector. Besides, EVs offer lower running and operational costs, as well as lower tailpipe emissions. All these factors put together make a strong case for EV adoption in Pakistan.

The article provides some brief highlights of the work undertaken by the ECOSF on decarbonizing the road transport sector in Pakistan as part of its support program to the Government of Pakistan in meeting its climate goals. Through this effort, we assessed the climate benefits of accelerated adoption of eMobility in Pakistan in terms of lower demand for transport fuels, reduced GHG emissions and the need for grid expansion and strengthening of distribution network in Pakistan.

It is pertinent to mention that ECOSF as the founder member of the Asian STI Think Tank Networks (ASTN) has joined to serve as a Member of the Editorial Board of the Asian Research Policy (ARP) journal. The ARP is being co-hosted by the Korea Institute of S&T Evaluation and Planning (KISTEP) of Republic of Korea, which aims to transform its existing network of prestigious S&T institutions into knowledge platform with dedicated Journal for Science, Technological and Innovation policy of Asia. The aim of Asian Research Policy is to enhance the national R&D system by establishing channels of communication between academics, research experts and policymakers around the world.

**ECOSF and BTBU held an annual review meeting of the Joint Training Center on Scientific, Technological and Economic Cooperation under the BRI**

A review meeting was held virtually to oversee and supervise the progress and the future plans for 2022 of the BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training Center on January 6, 2022.



President ECOSF Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro co-chaired the meeting and in his welcome address, he appreciated the leadership of Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU) for their continued support towards the Joint Training Center. President Soomro emphasized over the need for developing the human resource capacity of the participating Belt and Road Countries to effectively realize the intended goals of socio-economic development in the region.

Dr. Di Yuna, Director BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training Center presented the progress report of 2021 and the work-plan for the year 2022, and suggested strategies towards further strengthening the role and effective delivery of training programs by the Joint Training Center. Engr. Khalil Raza also participated and contributed towards the discussion and suggested interventions to conduct training programs in more meaningful ways. During the meeting, both sides agreed on the work-plan of the Joint Training Center which will host three training events in 2022 with a key focus on thematic areas of; climate, sustainable energy and economic development.

In the end, Prof. Xu Dandan, Vice President, BTBU endorsed the work plan and appreciated the role of ECOSF carrying forward the training agenda on critical topics for infrastructure development and socio-economic growth for B&R countries, including the ECO Member Countries.

It is important to mention that BTBU-ECOSF Joint Training Center was launched in 2020, which aims to promote the sustainable economic and social development of BRI countries through training in the fields of technology application, industrial economics, S&T standards and science communication. The Center would serve as a strategic training platform, which is deemed to be critical for infrastructure development and socio-economic growth for B&R countries, including the 10 ECOSF member countries.

For further information on the past trainings of the Center, please visit our [website](#).

**17<sup>th</sup> National and 3<sup>rd</sup> International Iranian Crop Science Congress Co-organized by Shahid-Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran and ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) virtually in Iran**



The Crop Science Society of Iran in partnership with the Shahid-Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran and ECOSF in collaboration with numerous other Iranian entities, organized the “17th National and 3rd International Iranian Crop Science Congress” with the slogan; “Knowledge-based, Smart Agriculture and Contract Farming”, virtually on 25-27 January 2022.

The congress was the most important gathering of crop scientists in Iran in recent years and provided a platform to the crop plant specialists, researchers and decision-makers in all aspects of crop sciences to present their latest findings and experiences and learn about important developments in these areas of science and technology.

The participants comprising of scientists, researchers and academia in crop sciences and related fields from Iran and other countries including ECO countries attended the conference. On behalf of ECOSF, President Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro participated in the Congress as a Keynote speaker.

Professor Dr. Mansoor Omidi the President of the Crop Science Society of Iran opened the Congress and welcomed all the distinguished experts and participant. Afterwards,

some dignitaries of agriculture sector spoke in the opening session.

The Minister for Agriculture-Jehad of Iran H.E. Dr. Javad Sadatinejad also addressed the conference. He appreciated the organization of the conference and shared the policies and programmes of his ministry with participants. It is pertinent to mention that Iran is quite rich in agriculture especially in fresh and dry fruits.





President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor Soomro presented his keynote talk; **“Farmer Field School approach- a better tool to prepare farmers for the future challenges”**. In his speech, he introduced the ECOSF as an intergovernmental organization of 10 countries of ECO region. Prof. Soomro highlighted the roles, functions and the mandate of the Foundation, which is to support and fund research and promotion activities in Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation as well as the STEM education at different levels using the inquiry-based science education- IBSE approach. Prof. Soomro underlined the future challenges of sustainable agriculture and to the farmers. He emphasized that there is dire need to build the capacity of the farmers, thus, a well-tested methodology- the “Farmer Field School (FFS)” is widely used worldwide to build the capacity of the farmers on management, technology, and marketing of crop produce. FFS also helps farmers to develop new ways of thinking and problem-solving.

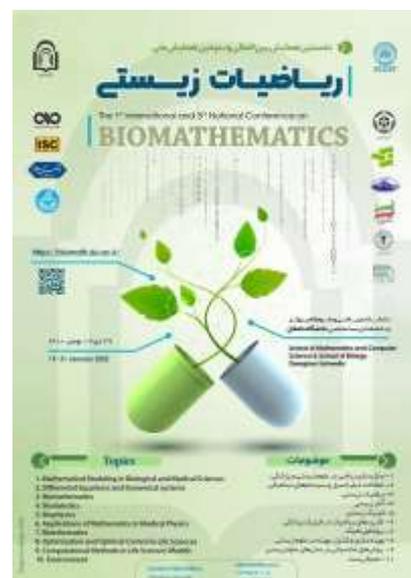
**1<sup>st</sup> International and 3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Biomathematics jointly organized by Damghan University of Semnan Province- Iran and ECOSF**

The 1<sup>st</sup> international and 3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Biomathematics was jointly organized on 19-21 January 2022 in hybrid mode by the School of Mathematics and Computer Sciences and School of Biology of Damghan University of Iran and ECOSF in collaboration with other Iranian Organizations. A large number of scientists, researchers, and students attended the Conference.

The conference was opened by the President of Damghan University, Professor Abdolali Basiri. He welcomed all the participants and gave a brief introduction of the University. He also highlighted the objectives of the conference.

Chief Guest of the Conference was H.E. Dr. Salar Amoli, Deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology of Iran. In his speech, he appreciated the organizers to arrange such an important conference in the wake COVID-19 pandemic. He hoped that conference would bring some key results/suggestions in the field of biomathematics for young researchers and scientists.

Senior Mathematician of Iran Professor Mehdi Behzad also spoke to the Conference and shared his lifelong experiences including his “total colouring theory”. In recognition of his executive contributions during his lifetime, the Iranian Mathematical Society has established the Dr. Mehdi Behzad's Award, an annual multinational award for recognition of individuals with outstanding leadership role in advancement of mathematics in their respective countries.

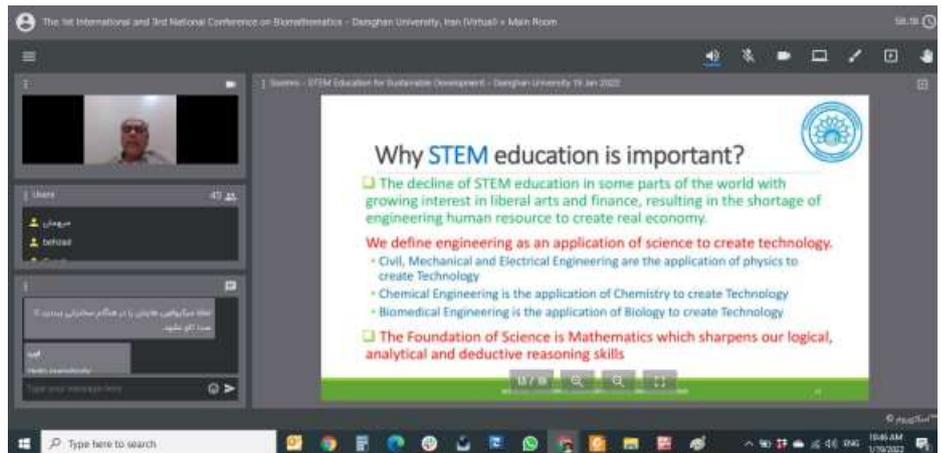


President ECOSF Prof. Manzoor H. Soomro also participated in the conference as a keynote speaker. At the outset, he thanked the leadership the team of Damghan University, especially the President Professor Basiri, for availing the opportunity to ECOSF to join in and co-organize the mega event. He assured the organizers of all possible support from the Foundation in future as well.

The title of the presentation of President Soomro was “STEM Education for Sustainable Development”. In his presentation, Prof. Soomro briefly introduced ECOSF and its aims and objectives. He also shared the ongoing programmes of the Foundation. Further, he shared that Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation (SETI) is inevitable for sustainable development of any country including ECO region. To achieve the development and infrastructural needs of sustainable future, a strong base of STEM education is mandatory, he added. Prof. Soomro also shared that STEM develops critical thinking among the learners and helps them to become independent thinkers, decision makers, team players and lifelong learners.

Among other resource persons, there were 13 international and 8 national key scientists/experts who shared their experiences and newest progress in different themes of the conference, with the participants.

The event was a multidisciplinary meeting forum for scientists and researchers who develop and apply mathematical and computational tools to the study of phenomena in the broad fields of biology, medicine, environmental science, biotechnology, bioengineering, etc. Biomathematics seeks mathematical illustration and modelling of the biological phenomenon using applied mathematical techniques and tools. This could be beneficial in both theoretical and practical research. This annual conference provided an appropriate opportunity for the amplification of knowledge and experience, and expansion of thought and imagination.



**ECOSF participated in the “Water Futures” Conference organized by Foundation Jeunes Scientifiques Luxembourg**

ECOSF participated in the Water Futures Conference organized by Foundation Jeunes Scientifiques Luxembourg on January 27, 2022. The conference brought together Dr. Mara Manieri, Jonk Fuerscherin in 2020, and Dr Laurent Pfister, head of the research unit “Environmental sensing and modelling” (ENVISION) to share their latest research finding on water security. The conference provided an opportunity for experts and research scholar to share their latest research and insights on the challenges and risks of climate change, concerning dangers such as an increased risk of drought or a reduction in water quality. On behalf of ECOSF, its President Prof. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro participated in the event.

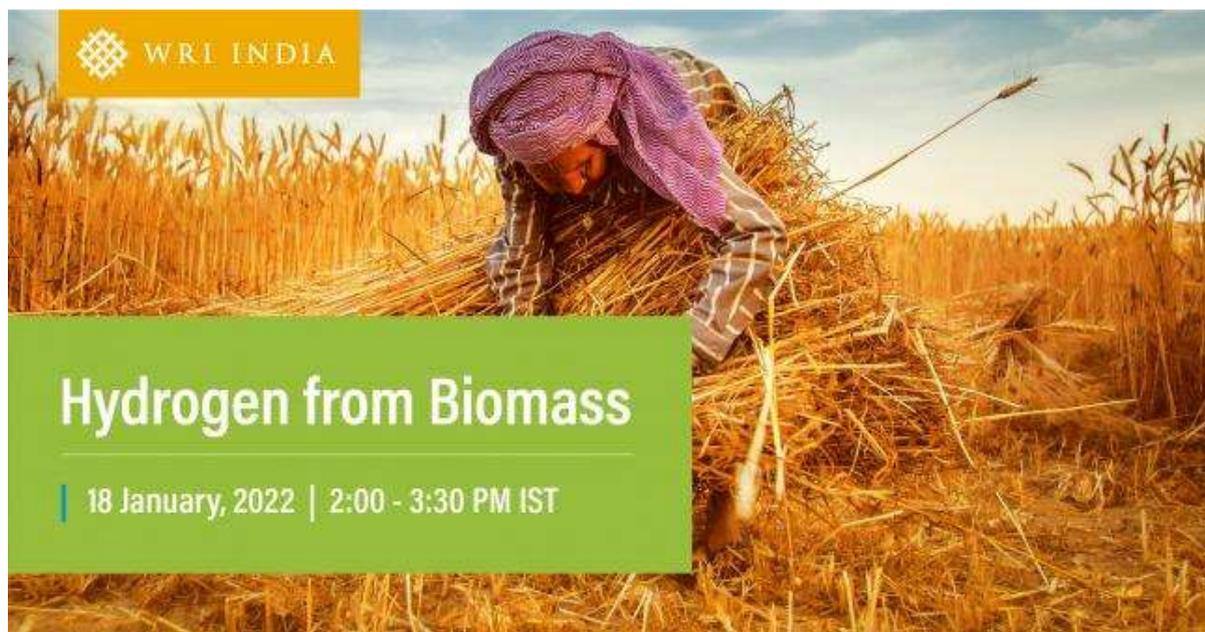
Participating scientists and scholars presented their latest research and scientific processes for the detection and interpretation of the hydrological cycle, innovative solutions for critical challenges in water security areas. The event was held under COVID Check program at Forum Campus Geesseknäppchen in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Hereditary Grand Duke and Hereditary Grand Duchess, Prince Guillaume and Princess Stéphanie.



**ECOSF participated in the Webinar on Hydrogen from Biomass organized by World Resource Institute.**

World Resource Institute (WRI) hosted a webinar on “Hydrogen from Biomass” on January 18, 2022. The Webinar generated discussion and provided insights into availability of biomass, processes and technology for generating hydrogen, the technology readiness levels (TRL) and policy levers that can enable hydrogen generation from biomass.

The webinar explored specific pathways which would be helpful in evaluating the value chain of a biomass-based hydrogen production in the region. Many participants representing the government policymakers, academia, industry associations, farmers, and stakeholders in the renewable energy sector participated in the virtual event. On behalf of ECOSF, Engr. Khalil Raza participated in event.



Leading hydrogen experts delivered their talks on conversion technologies from biomass to hydrogen and highlighted the role of policy levers to create an enabling ecosystem for hydrogen production from biomass. Experts underscored that the countries with predominant agricultural base can leverage biomass from agriculture residue for producing hydrogen. This can also have other benefits like reduced air pollution (caused due to burning of the crop residues), reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emission, and increased farmer incomes.

Hydrogen produced from renewable sources is emission free and is considered a green fuel. One of the promising ways to produce this green hydrogen could be through biomass - a carbon neutral feedstock. Hence, hydrogen from biomass is an area which although nascent, holds great promise.

**Why 5G is causing flight cancellations?**



**Courtesy of Vox - By Rebecca Heilweil - Published on Jan 19, 2022**

Your 5G phone might finally work like the amazingly fast 5G phones you heard about in TV commercials. On January 19, Verizon and AT&T switched on new cellular frequencies that will boost connections for tens of millions of phones throughout the US. Now that these airwaves are activated, you should be able to download an entire movie to your phone in just a few minutes.

This is thanks to the addition of C-band frequency, which could not only improve speeds but also expand 5G coverage. AT&T has turned on these frequencies in eight metro areas throughout the US, while Verizon’s new 5G service will become available in more than 1,700 US cities over the course of this month. This is welcome news for anyone who owns or plans to buy one of these devices, which will be more than 10 times faster than their 4G predecessors. If you’re interested in these faster speeds,

you should check whether your current phone plan includes C-band coverage. But the complete rollout of this update also hinges on a familiar yet unexpected critic of cellular technology: the Federal Aviation Administration.

What's 5G got to do with airplanes? Not much, argue the wireless carriers hoping to deploy the technology. But the FAA says it's worried that C-band could interfere with some radio altimeters, aircraft safety tools that rely on nearby airwaves. The agency is so concerned that it's been fighting to delay 5G deployment and has issued guidance that could cause flight cancellations from airports operating near certain 5G antennas, meaning that anyone who flies or has one of these devices could be affected.

Just hours before the launch of the new 5G signals, Verizon and AT&T also agreed to delay the rollout of C-band within two miles of certain airport runways, though the expansion of 5G service will go forward everywhere else. The latest compromise came just a day after the CEOs of 10 of the largest US airlines wrote to Pete Buttigieg warning that the "nation's commerce will grind to a halt" due to the FAA's new rules.

Read more: <https://www.vox.com/recode/2022/1/12/22878622/5g-airplanes-c-band-interference-faa>

### Upcoming Events posted on ECOSF website and Facebook page

#### Technology Investment Meeting 2022

D-8, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development cooperation among the following countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey. D-8 Technology Transfer and Exchange Network is an informative and transaction-enabled network to be set up among the Eight Developing Muslim Countries. It will fulfill Technology market functions, pursue such missions as capacity building and information dissemination on technological capabilities, achievements, and needs of the D-8 Members.

D-8 Technology Transfer and Exchange Network Secretariat is going to organize "4th Technology Investment Meeting (TIM2022)" to be hold on 21, 22 February in Pardis Technology Park in Tehran. The purpose of the meeting is to serve as platform for both investors and startups in member countries and other Islamic States to share interests.

Read more: <http://ecosf.org/TIM2022>