
**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Sixth Meeting
19-21 October 2022, Baku, Azerbaijan**

Tehran Convention website

<https://tehranconvention.org/>

(Note by the interim Secretariat)

Introduction

Article 19.5 of the Tehran Convention provides for the development of a centralised database and information management system to function as a repository of all relevant data, serve as the basis for decision-making and as a general source of information and education for specialists, administrators, and the public at large.

By the time the Contracting Parties to the Tehran Convention met for their 3rd Conference (COP3) in Aktau, Republic of Kazakhstan, August 2011, preparations had started for the establishment of a Caspian web-based Environment Information Centre (CEIC). COP3 welcomed the progress and invited by letter of 8 December 2011, the Parties nominated National Environment Information Officers (NEIOs) to support and manage their country's participation and role in the Centre.

The development of the CEIC was sponsored by British Petroleum Exploration (Caspian Sea) Limited and coordinated on behalf of the interim Secretariat by GRID-Arendal. Meetings were held, and the NEIOs were trained early October 2012 at the premises of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen and in Arendal. Progress was reported to and the CEIC was launched at COP4, in Moscow, the Russian Federation, December 2012 (TC/COP4/8 of 10 October 2012).

After the conclusion of the first phase of the BP CEIC project in 2014 a proposal for the second phase was developed and submitted to BP for funding. The proposal was captured in the Note by the interim Secretariat of 19 June 2014, circulated by email of 29 October 2014.

At COP5, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 28-30 May 2014, the Ministers confirmed their recognition of the CEIC as the instrument for the collection, storage and dissemination of environmental information.

After delays in the project approval process due to external factors the second phase project was approved by BP in June 2017. By letter of 21 July 2017 the Contracting Parties were requested to nominate or confirm their NEIOs. The list of NEIOs and their terms of reference are attached as Annex I.

In Feb 2019, TCIS conducted a complete survey assessment of the CEIC portal, based on the detailed questionnaires filled by the 5 NCLO's.

At PrepCom-7 to COP6, Baku, Azerbaijan 16-20 September 2019, the Parties reviewed the status of the CEIC and its relation with the Tehran Convention web-side, and decided to merge the CEIC and Tehran Convention website under the web address www.tehranconvention.org.

In the fall of 2020, the web design company "Blue Melon" was contracted to merge the CEIC and the Tehran Convention website. While merging the two websites the attention was also given to improve the functionalities of the new merged website. The funds used for the building a new Tehran

Convention website were provided by the project "Addressing Marine Litter in the Caspian Sea region" funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation and Global Water Challenge.

On 13 October 2020, TCIS organized the Informal Expert Meeting on the Update of the Tehran Convention Website and the Caspian Environment Information Center. The meeting reviewed the static version of the website in form of PDFs as well as the PowerPoint presentation on the new website. Aide-Memoire of the Meeting is contained in Annex III.

In 2021 the updated website of the Tehran Convention became publicly available. The website includes an open part available on the Internet and an internal part, available for the registered users of the website.

The sections "News" and "Events" of the open part of the website are regularly updated by the TCIS. The information contained in the sections "Documents" and "Stakeholders" derives from the previous CEIC and requires a major update.

In February 2022 the Meeting was held to inform the NCLOs about the main features of the internal part of the Website and its functions. The meeting report is contained in Annex II. The meeting participants raised the question of responsibility to provide all the national information appearing on the website in the absence of NEIOs.

While the BP project came to an end, nevertheless there is a need is for the officers to provide information relevant to the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea and national reporting under the Tehran Convention.

Hence the proposed organizational and management structure of the new website is proposed and contained in Annex IV which includes new terms of reference of the NEIOs.

Suggested action

The Conference may wish to:

- Express its gratitude to GRID-Arendal and BP Azerbaijan for coordinating and financially supporting the development of the CEIC portal;
- Welcome the consolidation of the CEIC and the Tehran Convention website and express gratitude to the "Global Water Challenge and Coca-Cola Foundation" for financial support to carry out the building of the new website;
- Welcome the appointment of the NEIOs and call on them to continue performing their duties as per the NEIO terms of reference.

National Environmental Information Officer (NEIO) for the Caspian Environmental Information Center

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The Caspian Environmental Information Center (CEIC) is aimed at the development of the web-based resource in support to the implementation of the article 19.5 of the Tehran Convention: the establishment of a centralized database and information management system.

The Center's goal is to make reliable and high-quality data available to decision-makers on all levels in the Caspian region and beyond.

CEIC is a web portal, based on a virtual network of collaborating institutions in Caspian littoral states. The information supply to the CEIC is regulated on the basis of the Tehran Convention and negotiated agreements on information-sharing. It is the information tool of the Tehran Convention.

Overall Objectives

- To secure information-sharing through supporting the negotiations on and later implementation of the Protocol on Monitoring, Assessment and Exchange of Information;
- To work towards the harmonization and standardization of information relevant to the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea and obtained in the context of the EMP;
- To make its operation sustainable by enlarging the network and to strengthen the cooperation and data exchange between the stakeholders in the Caspian Sea region at the national and sub-national levels
- To support the national reporting under the Tehran Convention and the development of the Second State of the Caspian Sea Marine Environment Report.

Specific Activities

Within the context of the overall objectives of the CEIC, National Environmental Information Officers will contribute to the implementation of the following outcomes and outputs:

Outcome 2

- Enlargement of the network and strengthening of cooperation and data exchange between the stakeholders in the Caspian Sea region at the national and sub-national levels
- Enlarged network of data contributors
- Further technical development and optimization of the CEIC portal
- Support the national reporting to the Tehran convention in the preparation of the 2nd State of the Caspian Sea Environment Report

Within the framework of the contract the NEIO will:

- Support the regional CEIC coordinator in conducting of the desk review "Assessment of information holders, existing data and national needs for reporting", related to the state of environment of the Caspian Sea, including GIS data, data sources, stakeholders and activities in the country related to the Caspian Sea environment;
- Act as the National Environmental information focal point with the Caspian Environmental Information Center: establish and maintain connection to all identified national information holders, paying special attention to the private sector and academia, encouraging their use of CEIC web portal resources;
- Organize the collection, storage and distribution of data on the environment of the Caspian

Sea and related socio-economic issues, providing to stakeholders the access to data from relevant government agencies and institutions, compliance reporting and monitoring, corporate data and research, academic research and other sources of information with the objective of enlarging the network of information providers and users;

- Publish and maintain the national data on the Caspian Environmental Information Center web portal, populating it with the relevant data, including, but not limited to databases, GIS data (shapefiles)
- Together with the National consultant collect and analyze data, necessary for the preparation of the National report to the Tehran convention in the Unified Reporting Format, approved by countries and the 2nd State of the Caspian Environment Report;
- Assist in sustainable management of the CEIC portal, including: the set-up of stakeholders user accounts, set up the data collection electronic working groups and administer the users and their tasks, coaching user sessions, management of data quality, maintaining the data access policy, and data sources; coordination of data collection, harmonization and adequate presentation; management of the help-line to support information management platform tools, including contact directories, meeting schedules, events management, GIS maps and other web utilities; organize the translation of the relevant information in working languages of the Tehran convention (English and Russian); actively contribute to technical development and optimization of the CEIC portal.

Competences:

Corporate Competencies:

Demonstrates integrity and fairness, humanist values and ethical standards;
Promotes the vision, mission and strategic goals in line with the protection of the Caspian Sea
Ability to manage workload with minimum supervision;
Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Functional/Technical Competencies:

Strong understanding of the Tehran convention and other related International Environmental conventions and protocols such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Land Base Sources / Activities protocol (LBSA), the international Maritime conventions, the convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context (Espoo), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Changes (UNFCCC), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, etc.

Skillful with computers and software, having experience with more than one operating system; experience with office tools, mind mapping, databases, XML, GIS tools and shapefiles, schema and flowcharts (e.g. UML), project management tools (Gantt charts), and data visualization.

Strong analytical, research and English/Russian writing abilities;
Able to communicate clearly and effectively through e-mail and in person;

Required Skills and Experience:

Education

University degree in environment related area natural sciences.

Experience

At least 3 years of experience in relation to activities connected with the assessment of the environment of the Caspian Sea;
Sufficient institutional connection to government-managed information sources related to the state of the environment and socio-economic issues
Experience with IT tools is required, including the use of content management systems, social media, updating websites and use of standard Windows applications (Word, Excel, PPT) and Outlook;
Prior experience in research or academic capacity is an asset;
Prior experience working with an international or multilateral organization is an asset;
Experience with maintaining websites is an asset;

Language Requirements

Fluency and proficiency in English; or
Fluency and proficiency in Russian; working knowledge of English;

Supervision

Working under the direct supervision of the project manager (GRID-Arendal) and in direct collaboration with the National Focal Point to the Tehran Convention.

Time frame

The position is set for the overall duration of 6 months applied in agreed time slots within the project duration period (08/06/2017 – 08/07/2018).

The contract for the services provided by and related compensation of the NEIO will be managed by GRID-Arendal / UN Environment.

List of the National Environmental Information Officers (as of today)

Azerbaijan	Mr. Faig Mutallimov
Iran	Mr. Shahran Fadakar
Kazakhstan	Mr. Serik Akhmetov
Russia	Center of International Projects
Turkmenistan	Ms. Gozel Orazdurdiyeva

Annex II

Meeting on the Tehran Convention website

Report

Meeting Participants

Azerbaijan	Mr. Faig Mutallimov, National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer, Head of International organizations and projects subdivision, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Russian Federation	Ms. Tatiana Butylina, Deputy Director, Center for International Projects, National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Office Mr. Sergey Pavalati, Centre for International Projects, National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Office
Iran	Ms. Farnaz Shoaie, National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer, Marine Environment & Wetland Division, Department of Environment
Turkmenistan	Ms. Gozel Orazdurdiyeva, National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer
Kazakhstan	Mr. Serik Akhmetov, National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer
UNEP/Tehran Convention interim Secretariat	Mr. Mateusz Benko, Tehran Convention Officer, UN Environment Programme, Regional Office for Europe Ms. Kristina Russkikh, Communication officer, Tehran Convention interim Secretariat, UN Environment Programme Mr. Frits Schlingemann, Senior Advisor, Tehran Convention interim Secretariat

Meeting Summary

1. The meeting took place on February 24, 2022 and was conducted via an online platform with simultaneous English-Russian interpretation. The estimated duration of the meeting was 2.5 h. The objective of the meeting was to introduce the internal part of the TC website, its objectives and functionality.

Ms. Kristina Russkikh briefly went through the public (open) part of the website, presented its sections, the state of affairs and content. The participants were reminded that no changes in the structure of the website are planned in upcoming months. The participants were also informed of the planned updates of the information available in the public part of the website including review of the Stakeholder and Document sections.

2. The participants were informed about the main features of the internal part of the Website and its functions: Members, Wall, Files, Publications, Dashboard. They were introduced to the interface and system of Groups (Teams) of the website internal part. Functionality and access qualities of different groups (Caspian Sea region, Aktau protocol, country groups) were explained to the participants. It was also proposed to create the "Environment monitoring" group. In addition, it was agreed that new groups or folders for the files within the groups can be created by the TC secretariat following request made by the countries.

3. The system of files was explained to the participants. They were informed about different formats of the files that can be uploaded (PDF, Doc, images etc.), the information required to be provided when uploading the files, access level of the files (Group, Region and Public). The processes of uploading, editing and translation of the files were demonstrated as well. The attention of the participants was

drawn to the fact that the options for editing and translating of files on the website are not automatic and require replacing the original file with a new one.

4. The User's Guide to the TC Website was introduced. The Guide is available in English and Russian languages and contains detailed information about the new user's registration, files uploading, editing and translation, about the process of adding, editing, and submitting of publications. The participants were informed that in case if questions arise, they can address the TC secretariat.

5. The participants were familiarized with the process of registration of a new user. It was agreed that country tables containing all the current information about the registered users of the website will be sent to the participants shortly.

6. The participants were also informed of process of drafting, editing and submission of publications (Documents, News articles and Events). The participants were reminded that the options for editing and translating of publications on the website are not automatic and require replacing the original files and texts with the new ones. It was explained that firstly, publication needs to be drafted and users can return to their drafts as many times as needed. Then, once publication is ready, they need to submit it for approval by the Secretariat. This is proposed as a transition feature. In long term perspective the National Environmental Information Officer (NEIOs) should be responsible for the content of the publication related to their country. It was also mentioned that the participants can always reach the TC secretariat if the help with translation or with any other issues is needed.

7. It was agreed to use a disclaimer phrase to mark certain materials, proposed by the countries on the website. Ex: "This article was provided by national authorities of <name of the State> and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Tehran Convention interim Secretariat".

8. The NCLOs were invited to share their opinions on the question of public availability of National reports. It was also mentioned that the Secretariat has received the new National report from Kazakhstan recently. The general opinion was that National reports should stay public.

9. The question was raised concerning the (NEIOs), who would be responsible for all the national information appearing on the website. The TORs for these positions were shared a year ago and now it was proposed to familiarize with them once again and share any comments. Those TORs are supposed to be submitted to the consideration of the PrepCom and COP subsequently.

10. It was also reaffirmed that the work on adding the texts of the Convention and Protocols in national languages should be finalized. TC Secretariat also mentioned that it will work on the Documents and Stakeholders sections to make them up to date in the near term. It was agreed that the data (login and password) to enter the internal part of the website will be sent to the NCLOs together with the tables containing all the registered national users to renew the information and possibly add other users.

**Informal Expert Meeting on the Update of the
Tehran Convention Website and the Caspian Environment Information Center**

Aide-Memoire

The meeting was organized by the Tehran Convention Interim Secretariat (TCIS) with the objective to present a first draft and outline of the update of the website of the Tehran Convention (TC) and the Caspian Environment Information System (CEIC). It was moderated by Mr. Mateusz Benko (TCIS) with the participation of the National Convention Liaison Officers (NCLOs) and the National Environment Information Officers (NEIO) of the five Caspian Parties. Mr. Daniel Metille of the web design company "Blue Melon" presented the draft website. Also present were representatives of GRID-Arendal - which developed, maintained the CEIC - and of TCIS (list of participants below).

Mr. Benko introduced the meeting by presenting the circumstances, status as well as past and recent activities regarding the new website development. A static version of the website as PDFs and PowerPoint was the basis of this first consultation. An alpha version of the new website will be available for the Parties to test on 10 November 2020 with the final version envisaged to be ready by end December 2020. All available data and the access level structure from the old CEIC website will be carried over to the new website.

Mr. Metille then presented the draft website to the participants. The presentation is attached.

The main comments and suggestions by the participants were:

- The static draft website is not enough to provide comprehensive feedback.
- A search tool for the website is important. The IMO website was mentioned as a good example for public document access.
- To consider the option to add the text of the Convention and Protocols in other Caspian national languages. The depository of the Convention will be contacted to obtain the texts in other Caspian national languages.
- As far as possible more references and links to other stakeholders and topics should be integrated on the website.
- Caspian Sea environment monitoring data should be part of the CEIC in the future. The suggestion was made that the data should not be uploaded on the CEIC directly but provided via links to the respective national institutions. This functionality can be envisaged in the future once the Monitoring Protocol and the Working Group on Assessment and Monitoring (WGMA) are more clearly established by the Parties. Then clear linkages of that website functionality with the WGMA need to be made.
- The coordination between the NCLOs and the NEIOs need to be better established.
- Where will be the physical location of the CEIC data server? Currently the CEIC data is stored on a Moscow server and the TC website on a server in Geneva. The future server location is being identified and would be cheaper to operate from the Caspian Sea region.
- TC meetings other than the COPs should also be similarly displayed on the new website.
- The possibility of enabling the Caspian countries to prepare the national reports online should be explored.

Agreed actions:

- Modify the front page of the new website, e.g. a clearly identifiable Caspian picture/map will be put.
- A shared guidance note / statute for publishing on the new website will be developed which shall i.a. treat issues such as the language use, which and how contact information shall be displayed, the establishment of clear links to partners.
- The NCLOs and TCIS staff are requested to provide their respective profile pictures to TCIS for use on the new website.

- The option to display previous and future national reports under the TC on the new website will be explored under the current contract with the web design company.
- An overall management structure for the website (and CEIC) will be drawn up and submitted to the Parties for their approval.

Meeting Participants

Azerbaijan	Mr. Faig Mutallimov , Head of International Organizations and Projects Subdivision
Iran	Ms. Farnaz Shoaei , National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer Marine Environment & Wetland Division, Department of Environment Mr. Shahrar Fadakari , National Environmental Information Officer
Kazakhstan	Mr. Serik Akhmetov , National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer
Russian Federation	Center for International Projects , National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Office represented by Ms. Tatiana Butylina , Deputy Director,
Turkmenistan	Ms. Gozel Orazdurdyeva , National (Tehran) Convention Liaison Officer
Tehran Convention Interim Secretariat	Mr. Mateusz Benko , Tehran Convention Officer Mr. Daniel Nixdorf , Advisor Mr. Frederik Schlingemann , Senior Advisor
Blue Melon	Mr. Danielle Metille , CEO
GRID-Arendal	Mr. Valentin Yemelin , Head of Programme, Transboundary Governance and Environmental Crime Mr. Vincent Lalieu , Consultant

TC Website: Organizational and management structure

www.tehranconvention.org

1. Organization and Content of the website

The table below presents various sections of the new TC website. The structure of the website was built upon the former Tehran Convention website and Caspian Environment Information Centre (CEIC). The section "Cooperation and Partnership" was added to the new website. All other sections were taken from either former Tehran Convention website or the CEIC.

The lion's share of the work was carried out to improve the functionality and user interface of the new TC website. The migration of the information and files was also conducted to maintain the information which has been uploaded in previous years.

Tehran Convention website	
Tehran Convention	Caspian Environment Information Centre
Tehran Convention	
About the Tehran Convention	Documents
Text of the Convention	Stakeholders
Protocols to the Tehran Convention	News
Key Convention documents	Events
Projects supporting the Tehran Convention Meeting and Conference of the Parties	Intranet
Cooperation and Partnership	
Secretariat	
Country contacts	

2. Management of the website

The management of the new TC website will be the responsibility of the Tehran Convention Secretariat and the Contracting Parties of the Tehran Convention through nominated National Environment Information Officers (NEIOs). The responsibilities of the NEIOs are captured in the terms of reference outlined below.

3. Terms of reference and arrangements for National Environment Information Officers (NEIOs)

Based on the practice and experience in the past, the NEIOs will be nominated and mandated by their Government to:

- Act as the National focal point for providing and assisting the TC Secretariat in filling, reviewing, updating and managing the Tehran Convention related sections of the website;

- Under the overall supervision of the TC Secretariat, be responsible and accountable for making, receiving, reviewing, editing and updating contributions to the CEIC related sections of the TC website.
- Ensure that contributions made through them are cleared by their Government and, where and as appropriate through their colleague-NEIOs, by the Governments of the other Contracting Parties.
- Promote, enlist, and ensure widespread contributions and use of the website by broad sections of public administration, scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the public at large.
- Assist and support the respective National Convention Liaison Office/Officers in his/her functions and responsibilities related to information sharing