

**Framework Convention
for the Protection of the Marine
Environment of the Caspian Sea**

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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Third Meeting
Aktau, 10-12 August 2011**

CaspEco Steering Committee Recommendations

Note by the interim Secretariat

The Annex to the present note provides recommendations adopted by the CaspEco Steering Committee during its Meeting in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, on September 14, 2010.



Steering Committee Meeting

Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan: September 14, 2010



The Caspian Sea:

*Restoring Depleted Fisheries and Consolidation of
a*

*Permanent Regional Environmental Governance
Framework*

CASPECO Project - Tehran Convention



Recommendations



***COMPONENT I. ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT OF AQUATIC
BIORESOURCES IN THE CASPIAN SEA***

***OUTCOME 1. Improved Ecosystem-based Management of Aquatic Bioresources Management
(EBBM)***

Output 1. New analytical models and decision support tools for EBBM

Recommendations:

- The SC urges the Caspian states to facilitate the work of the national technical working group on EBBM and to encourage timely delivery of the tasks assigned.
- The PCMU is requested to:
 - 1) Revisit the ToR for the EBBM Working Group at the Meeting of Fish Passage and Spawning Grounds planned for October taking into account the budgetary and time constraints;
 - 2) Invite one member from the EBBM Working Group to the Fish Passage and Spawning Grounds Meeting in October.

Output 2. Unified Environmental Monitoring Program operational and data utilized

Recommendations:

- The SC calls upon the PMCU to expedite the work of the EMP and to facilitate inter-linking the EMP Working Group with other activities such as the Environmental Reporting Format, the State of the Environment Report and the Caspian Information Centre.
- One of the EMP members will be assigned to lead the EMP Working Group.
- The SC calls upon the PMCU and TCIS to jointly support the development of main elements of a possible new protocol in the area of pollution monitoring in collaboration with relevant international institutions".
- The SC appreciates the support of the IAEA (MEL) and CASPECO for the first training workshop on Environmental Risk Assessment and requests for the second follow-up training workshop to be held in Kazakhstan by early 2011.

Output 3. Capacity building for bioresources governance and management.

Recommendations:

- The PMCU in collaboration with FAO organizes a regional workshop on stock assessment.
- The SC approves the CaspEco Work Plan Update, and calls upon the PMCU and the TCIS to expedite the

implementation of the same in order to achieve the expected outcomes within the life time of the project. The SC agrees to the changes that might be required to be effected by the PMCU and the TCIS in consultation with the Caspian littoral states.

- “The CaspEco project is expressing readiness to offer technical and financial support to the fisheries organizations for the development of a regional legal instrument on the conservation and rational use of bioresources and to arrange for a first meeting within the next 6 months”.

OUTCOME 2. Invasive Species Introduction Mitigated.

Output 4 and Output 5. Recommendations for regional management of ballast water to control invasive species traffic among the Caspian and the Black and Baltic seas and Regional collaborative process focusing on Mnemiopsis Leyidi control

Recommendations:

- The SC calls upon the PMCU to establish a Caspian-wide Task Force (comprising of representatives from Ministries of Transport, Environment, and Fisheries in each country) and in cooperation with GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnerships Programme to develop regional monitoring programme and recommendations for joint regional action, and to submit recommendations of this Task Force for further possible inclusion and incorporation into the NCAPs”.)
- The SC tasks the PMCU to prepare a report on the “State of Invasive Species – *Mnemiopsis Leyidi* in the Caspian Sea” to present it within the framework of the CaspEco fisheries meeting and to submit its conclusions to the COP4.

OUTCOME 3. Caspian stakeholders implement policies & measures to increase reproductive success of Caspian’s diadromous fish species.

Output 6. Pilots to improve existing hatcheries efficiency including location consideration, culture techniques.

Recommendations:

- The SC appreciates the progress made with regard to these pilot projects and calls upon the PMCU to organize a regional fisheries workshop to elaborate the findings and experiences of these pilot projects in conjunction with any other relevant meeting.

Output 7. Pilot demonstrations to identify, rehabilitate and/or expand access to natural spawning grounds.

Recommendations:

- The SC tasks the PMCU and the TWGs on Fish Spawning and Fish Passage to expedite the implementation of their Work Plan as agreed upon by their members and to present their findings to the main stakeholders and to the TCIS.
- The SC tasks the PMCU and the TWG on Fish Passage to develop and implement at least one pilot project to modify an existing fish passage facility to increase efficiency and effectiveness and return on investment.

OUTCOME 4. Stakeholders apply regional, Circum-Caspian approach to habitat conservation in the Caspian.

Output 8. Circum-Caspian network of “special protected areas, wildlife habitats and essential fish habitats for Caspian ecosystem” (SPACE).

Recommendations:

- The SC calls upon the Caspian states to conduct Caspian-wide annual migratory fish and seal surveys.
- “The SC calls upon the PMCU to establish the SPACE network to ensure that all key coastal habitats are represented in their regional system of protected areas subject to the designation of coastal areas by the Caspian countries before the end of 2010”.
- The SC appreciates the initiatives by the PMCU and representatives of the CISS, Leeds University UK and calls upon the members of the working group on seals to expedite collaborative Caspian-wide seal surveys as stipulated in their contracts.
- The SC recommends the Caspian states to include the Concept Plan on SSPA into the SCAP and subsequently NCAP and to include the seal data-into the Caspian Information Centre.
- The SC tasks the PMCU to provide technical assistance to help conduct the preparatory recommendation work and surveys required for the establishment by the Government of Kazakhstan of a coastal protected area for seal conservation along Kazakhstan’s Caspian coastline.
- The SC recommends to the PMCU to initiate the development of a Management Plan for the Kura River Delta in the year 2011.

OUTCOME 5. Coastal communities increase participation and contribute measurably to improved bioresources conservation in the Caspian Sea.

Output 9. Matched Small Grants Programme (MSGP)

Recommendations:

- The SC calls upon CaspEco to submit potential MSGP proposals received so far, to the International Financing Institutions (IFIs) on behalf of the SCM.
- The SC appreciates the extensive work done under this outcome and encourages the countries to submit the potential MSGP proposals received so far to the national private and public sector, to UNDP and to the GEF Focal Points to be considered for financial support under other grant programs.
- The SC tasks the PMCU to publish the results of the MSGPs/MEGs implementation in English and Russian languages, and to hold a regional assessment meeting to share the experiences gained by the grantees.

COMPONENT II. STRENGTHENED REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE.

OUTCOME1. Institutional Setting of the Tehran Convention is fully operational and sustainable

Recommendations:

- The SC notes that the TC is a sustainable development convention addressing the priorities and interests of a wide range of government agencies and recommends that all Caspian states consider establishing and/or strengthening Inter-Ministerial/Departmental Coordination Mechanisms (IMCM), in order to engage and ensure broad national support and participation for the implementation of the TC and its protocols.
- The SC calls upon TCIS and PMCU to assist the countries through the development of guidelines, demonstration of best practices and the provision of other forms of technical assistance and advice for the establishment of IMCM.
- The SC recommends to the Caspian states to expedite the internal process for signature of the Protocol concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents, and the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.
- SC recommends that the Caspian states finalize the Protocol on Biodiversity Conservation; and the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities.
- The SC recommends that the Caspian states expedite the final decision on the location of the Tehran Convention Permanent Secretariat at the COP3.

OUTCOME 2: COORDINATION AND SYNERGY WITH OTHER CASPIAN PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES.

Recommendations:

- The SC calls upon the Caspian states to consider the development of new international agreements in pertinent areas of concern such as a regional legal instrument on the conservation and rational use of bioresources and a main element of a possible new Protocol in the area of pollution monitoring.
- The SC calls upon the Caspian states to support and help to implement the proposal for a targeted campaign to explore partnerships with oil and gas and shipping companies to serve the objectives of the Tehran Convention¹.
- The SC calls upon the PMCU and TCIS to undertake resource mobilization measures in support of the Tehran Convention process in close collaboration with multilateral development banks, the public and the private sector.

¹ This recommendation was resumed and solved later at the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the COP3, held from 16-17 September 2010 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

OUTCOME 3. Littoral states implement the Strategic Convention Action Programme (SCAP) as adopted by the COP II at the regional level and approve and implement NCAPs at the national/sub-national level.

Recommendations:

- The SC acknowledges the progress made and urges the Caspian states to endorse the National Convention Action Plans and through their relevant Ministries to earmark financial resources for the implementation of the NCAPs.
- The SC reiterates the need for systematic monitoring of the SCAP implementation through the NCAPs stressing the need for indicator-linked reporting and, to the extent possible, quantifiable measurement of the progress.
- The SC calls upon TCIS and PMCU to provide capacity building to the Caspian states through, *inter alia*, a) protocol-specific training workshops; b) reviews of national legislation; c) preparation of protocol implementation guidelines.

OUTCOME 4. ENHANCED STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT IN THE TC PROCESS AND IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE CASPIAN SEA ENVIRONMENT.

Recommendations:

- The SC affirms the necessity to establish a web-based Caspian Information Centre (CIC) and requests the PMCU and TCIS to continue supporting and collaborating to establish the CIC as soon as possible and to provide full information on the exercise to the Caspian states.
- The SC welcomes the efforts for the preparation of the first State of the Environment Report and suggests that it should be issued every 4 years and include the results of regional monitoring and reporting and information sharing².
- The SC encourages the preparation of the Caspian Biodiversity Atlas upon fulfillment of the activities under Component I.
- The SC acknowledges the progress made and calls upon the Caspian states to ensure the adoption and implementation of the National Public Participation Strategies as part of their NCAP's.

OUTCOME 5: ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE CASPECO PROJECT

Recommendations:

- The SC calls upon the PMCU to fully assist and facilitate the Project Mid-Term Evaluation and to share the Evaluation Report with all the countries and international partners.
- The SC requests the Caspian states to fully collaborate with the international consultants for the Mid-Term

² This recommendation was later amended during the Meeting on the first Caspian State of the Environment Report, held on 19 September 2010 in Almaty, Kazakhstan and will be taken up at the COP3, which will take place from 24-26 November in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Evaluation and to ensure access to pertinent officials, relevant information and appropriate places for review and comment in the course of work during their stay in the coastal state.

- The SC tasks the PMCU with the development of a set of ‘Management Responses’ based on comments received from the countries and the international partners

Future of the CASPECO and its PMCU

CASPECO and the Tehran Convention:

Recommendations:

- The SC acknowledges the vital role of the CASPECO project towards the Tehran Convention process and the implementation of the Tehran Convention Program of Work and affirms the need for an extension of the project throughout the first half of 2012. Additional funding should be sought through resource mobilization measures.
- The SC expresses its gratitude and acknowledges the fruitful work of the present SC chairperson from Kazakhstan, Ms. Eldana Sadvakasova, the National Focal Point for the CEP and Vice Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

GEF Support:

Recommendations:

- The SC welcomes the initiative of UNDP on the PIF for Knowledge-based Regional Cooperation To Mitigate and Adapt to the Impacts of Climate Change in the Caspian with Emphasis on Water level Fluctuations and requests all the Caspian states to submit their Letter of Endorsement (LOE) and provide maximum support towards the formulation and implementation of the intended project, when and if approved by the GEF.
- The SC supports the idea of a new UNDP-GEF project in support of the Tehran Convention process or aspects thereof and requests the PMCU and TCIS to initiate consultations and the preparation of a proposal to that effect.