

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

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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
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Ongoing project preparations and other possibilities for cooperation

(Note by the interim Secretariat)

Introduction.

At the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP5) to the (Tehran) Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (TC), 28 - 30 May 2014, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, the Parties welcomed the participation of relevant international organizations and the private sector, including the oil and gas industry and the maritime transport companies, and encouraged them to support the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols as well as called upon all donors to consider, continue, renew or increase bilaterally or multilaterally their support to the implementation of the provisions of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols.

In light of the above the interim Secretariat has undertaken various efforts to secure support to the implementation of the provisions of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols.

Suggested actions:

The Parties may wish to provide further guidance on the ongoing project preparations.

Project: Addressing Marine Litter in the Caspian Sea Region

Partner: New World; Coca Cola Foundation

Objective: The project goal is to establish a sound network for cooperation to prevent and reduce marine litter in the Caspian Sea. In order to strengthen efforts of the Caspian littoral states, the Parties to the Tehran Convention, a Caspian Marine Litter Action Plan embodied in the implementation of the Protocol Against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (Moscow Protocol) will be developed together with other relevant stakeholders. In doing so, it is crucial to collect and assess reliable information to address marine litter in the Caspian Sea and ensure extra budgetary funding for future activities addressing marine litter.

Scope: 280 000 USD

Stage: Project finalized and submitted to the partner, a reply is expected by September 2018

Project: Addressing marine litter and marine plastic – a systemic approach in the Caspian Sea

Partner: Official Development Assistance of the Russian Federation - via UNDP Trust Fund

Objective: The project goal is to prevent and to the maximum extent possible minimize marine litter in the Caspian Sea with special focus on marine plastics. This will be achieved through amending the national policy and regulatory frameworks on waste management, comprehensive promotion of a circular economy/life-cycle approach, carrying out investments in waste management as well as promoting sustainable consumption and productions patterns, by supporting behavioral changes of consumers. The main outputs of the project are 1) comprehensive information and data on marine litter in the Caspian Sea; 2) improved policy and regulatory frameworks for waste management; 3) enhanced circular economy in littoral countries to improve plastic management; and 4) preliminary investments in waste management. The project will also consolidate efforts of the Caspian littoral countries which are already in place towards better waste management. It will furthermore built on previous work of the Caspian littoral countries under the Tehran Convention, in particular the Protocol on Land-based Sources of Pollution and the outcomes of the Strategic Convention Action Programme.

Scope: 4 000 000 USD;

Stage: Under development, informal consultations with the Russian MFA held by the UNDP partner, informal approval received on the scope and general structure of the programme.

Given the necessity to include letters of endorsement and confirmation of co-financing, the Parties may wish to discuss next steps in finalizing the project including the question of co-financing.

Project: Scientific Collaboration in the Caspian Region on Matters Related to Climate Change and the Caspian Sea Level Fluctuation

Partner: National Natural Science Foundation of China

Objective: The project will assist the TC Parties to carry out research on climate change in the Caspian Sea region in relation with the Caspian Sea level fluctuation. In line with Article 16 of the Tehran Convention the project will aim at collecting and assessing climate change related data and information and come up with scenario-based predictions for the Caspian Sea region. The project will be implemented under the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Natural Science

Foundation of China and UN Environment on scientific collaboration. This cooperation would imply that the Foundation will provide scientists from China to work with the group of scientists from the Caspian region to jointly carry out scientific research

Scope: Unknown

Stage: The concept note of the project was not developed yet. However, based on our informal consultations, the Foundation might be interested in supporting the scientific collaboration in the Caspian region

By the letter of 5 March 2018, the interim Secretariat reached out to the Parties to seek their opinion on whether such a scientific collaboration would be welcomed. It is our understanding that the Parties wish to discuss this possible partnership in a multilateral format.

Project: Institutional Development and Capacity-Building to Ensure a Climate Resilient Future in the Caspian Sea Basin"

Partner: Green Climate Fund (GCF) via UNEP as an accredited agency to the GCF

Objective: The project goal is to develop a coordinated and integrated Caspian basin-wide and multi-sectoral response to climate change induced threats. This would provide vulnerable coastal communities within the littoral states, their populations, and public and private sector interests with the tools necessary to adapt to current and future predictable climate variability and change. To achieve the desired solution it will be necessary to: (1) formalize the commitment of Tehran Convention member countries to effectively address climate change related challenges at regional, national and local levels through the creation of a climate related Regional Center of Excellence; (2) modernize Tehran Convention countries' hydrometeorological capacity including and especially, for the purposes of this project, develop effective linkages between national level hydrometeorological services and community level users in the Caspian Sea basin; (3) Improved identification of current and future predictable climate change effects on coastal economies, populations and the natural resources of the Caspian Sea and basin, including the creation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to support private sector participation in the work of the project; (4) develop and initiate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to reduce vulnerability of coastal populations and thus create adaptive management capability at local level; and (5) develop a country, multi-stakeholder driven 10-year follow-on adaptation program to build on the results of the proposed GCF sponsored project. An important element of the preferred solution, cutting across each of the five project objectives, is the provision of educational initiatives targeted to and developed with the direct participation of those vulnerable communities and populations.

Scope: 30 000 000 USD

Stage: Under preparation; second draft of the concept note developed

The endorsement of the project by the National Designated Authorities is crucial for successful approval of the Project by the GCF. For that purpose, the Parties may wish to ensure the involvement and strong support of the NDAs to the project.

Project: Supporting the Caspian countries' Efforts to Meet the Aktau Protocol Objectives

Partner: LUKOIL

Objective: Securing trained personnel which will be responsible for the Aktau Protocol implementation process is an essential element for effective oil pollution preparedness and response in the Caspian Sea. For that the creation of a regional network of designated professionals and experts around the Caspian Sea is vital. Such well-functioning network will undertake to address first crucial issues such as the building of capacity and sharing relevant experience within the region. For that purpose, a project was developed, based on the "Priority Actions for the Implementation of the Aktau Protocol" as agreed at the meeting in Bandar Anzali, I.R. Iran 16-20 April 2017. The project document was shared with the LUKOIL company for its potential financial support.

Scope: 220 000 USD

Stage: Project developed in 2017 requires updating in light of the probable approval by COP6 of the "Caspian Sea Plan Concerning Regional Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution in Cases of Emergency" as well as the "Oil pollution preparedness and response training program and exercise guidelines for the Caspian Sea region".

Given the role of the oil, gas and transport industry as major drivers of economic and social development in the region, which carry great responsibility to ensure the safety of their operations and the protection of the Caspian Sea environment, it is proposed to seek both their in-kind and financial support for implementing the Aktau Protocol. For that purposes, the updated project document may also be shared with other oil, gas and transport companies operating in the Caspian region.

Project: Strengthening Stakeholder and Public Engagement for Sustainable Development in the Caspian Sea Region

Partner: The Great Caspian Foundation; Integral Petroleum

Objective: Despite the work carried out in the course of the last 10+ years, a culture of civil society engagement in the Caspian littoral countries is still in its early stages of development. One key element to ensure long-term stakeholder engagement is to establish sustainable institutional mechanisms on the regional, national and local level, which will provide stakeholders including the public with the possibility to engage in environmental policy-making and implementation on a regular basis. Therefore, it is the main objective of this project to reinvigorate, expand and maintain a vibrant environment of active stakeholder networks engaged in the implementation of the Tehran Convention and in supporting sustainable development in the region.

Scope: 3 000 000 USD

Stage: Under development, first draft of the project developed and shared with the partner.

Project: Conserving the Caspian seal for resilient Caspian marine ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods

Partner: To be identified

Objective: Marine species of the Caspian Sea, their habitats and ecosystem services are threatened by a range of current direct, anthropogenic pressures and predicted impacts from future climate change including substantial decreases in sea level, increased water temperatures and reductions in winter sea ice. The Caspian seal is a flagship conservation species, being a migratory, transboundary marine mammal, listed as Endangered by IUCN, and which is included on appendices I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species. The main goal of this project is to enhance and develop capacity among the

Caspian littoral states to conserve and protect the Caspian seal, and its habitat. Addressing the conservation threats to the Caspian seal will have ecosystem wide impacts, making the overall Caspian marine ecosystem more resilient, and will promote sustainable livelihoods for the communities dependent on those ecosystems. This proposal seeks to update past research where necessary to inform conservation policy, build research capacity in the region, and to implement key recommendations of the past work, with a focus on reducing anthropogenic sourced seal mortality, and the implementation of seal protected areas.

Scope: 1 500 000

Stage: Draft concept note developed

Project: Launching the Caspian Environment Monitoring Programme as a Tool for Regional Cooperation to Monitor the Environment of the Caspian Sea

Partner: To be identified

Objective: The Caspian Environment Monitoring Programme was developed and endorsed by the COP4 in 2012 as a tool to fulfil the commitment of the Parties to the Tehran Convention under its Article 19. The goal of the project is to initiate implementation of the Caspian Environment Monitoring Programme which will serve as the basis for decision-making to improve the environmental status of the Caspian Sea. Up till now, lack of available funds, capacity and expertise by the Caspian littoral states prevented this programme from being put into full-fledged operation. Consequently, the project will support the ongoing efforts of the TC Parties in monitoring and assessing the marine environment of the Caspian Sea by, among others: 1) Establishing a network of national chemical laboratories; 2) Enhancing the national laboratory technical capabilities; 3) Developing a methodology for a marine environment integrated assessment and 4) Capacity building and personnel training in marine environmental sampling, chemical analyses, data quality control and interpretation.

Scope: 1 000 000 USD

Stage: First draft of the project developed