



Memorandum of Understanding

Between

The National Environmental Protection Agency of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

And

The Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan

On

Cooperation in the field of environmental protection

The National Environmental Protection Agency of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and The Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan hereinafter collectively referred to as "the Parties";

Recognizing the key role of cooperation between the Parties on the exchange of environmental and climate change information for sustainable development, conservation of biodiversity habitat and enhanced coordination in the Panj-Amu Darya Basin;

Acknowledging the great potential for cooperation between the government authorities of both countries and particularly the Parties to this MoU on issues related to environmental protection;

Considering historical interest, decisions and the results of bilateral meetings on environmental cooperation between the government authorities of both countries and particularly the Parties to this MoU (including meetings in 2006/2007, 2012/2013, 2017 and 2019);

Have reached the following understanding:

Article 1

General Goals

This MoU has the following goals:

1. Providing a framework for bilateral cooperation on environmental issues between the Parties;
2. Conclusion of an agreement on exchange of environmental information, knowledge and data between the Parties;
3. Strengthening cooperation between the Parties in terms of protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity;
4. Facilitating and strengthening cooperation between the Parties in designing and implementing joint strategies, programs and projects and accessing global multilateral financial, technical and technological support; and
5. Strengthening cooperation between the Parties in monitoring of the quality of water resources in the Panj-Amu River Basin.

Article 2

Areas of Cooperation

The Parties agree to cooperate on:

1. Exchanging data and information on environmental protection, water quality and climate change based on existing capacity and facilities;
2. Training of environmental and climate change experts, exchange of results from research, and organizing technical and professional capacity building programs;
3. Developing and implementing joint environmental protection strategies, programs and projects;
4. Protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems and biodiversity;
5. Environmental impact assessments;
6. Implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements; and
7. Monitoring the quality of water resources.

Article 3

Activities and Initiatives

- 1. Exchange of information and data on environment, water quality and climate change**
 - 1.1. Develop a procedure to exchange of information on the environment and climate change;
 - 1.2. Develop online environmental information exchange systems;
 - 1.3. Convene seminars, workshops, trainings and study tours between the Parties for sharing practical experiences; and
 - 1.4. Introduce Parties' focal points to facilitate the exchange of information.
- 2. Cooperation on capacity building**
 - 2.1. Facilitate opportunities for environmental training for governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society, and community representatives in both countries;
 - 2.2. Convene environmental capacity-building programs, academic and professional symposiums, seminars and study tours;
 - 2.3. Exchange technical experience among scholars, experts as well as academic and research centers regarding environmental management and conservation.
- 3. Design and implementation of joint environmental strategies:**
 - 3.1. Design and implement joint strategies, programs and projects to protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity and facilitate access to global environmental financial, technical and technological opportunities;
 - 3.2. Share experiences and lessons-learned on environment-related sustainable development goals.

- 4. Cooperation on conservation, sustainable use and restoration of habitats**
 - 4.1. Take action on reducing biodiversity-related crimes in the border areas, e.g. wildlife hunting, deforestation and other threats;
 - 4.2. Design and implement species research and evaluation by experts in protected areas of both countries;
 - 4.3. Develop management plans for protected areas and national parks for both countries;
 - 4.4. Promote eco-tourism in both countries.

- 5. Cooperation on Environmental Impact Assessment**
 - 5.1. Cooperate on environmental impact assessments of joint projects between both countries;
 - 5.2. Notify and consult each other on major projects that may have a significant adverse environmental impacts across borders;
 - 5.3. Support in preparing the environmental atlas, catalogue, bulletins, state of environment report, and developing university education programs on environmental impact assessment.

- 6. Cooperation on implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements**
 - 6.1. Design joint programs between both countries to implement the Multilateral Environmental Agreements' goals and to exchange experiences and professional knowledge;
 - 6.2. Addressing common/joint environmental challenges in global and regional negotiations, using appropriate diplomatic channels of both countries; and
 - 6.3. Undertake the necessary preparations for participating in global, regional and national environmental conferences.

Article 4

Implementation

To achieve the goals of this MoU, both Parties will:

1. Collaborate to form a joint Technical Working Group (TWG), introduce their representatives and assign focal points for better coordination between the parties.

The TWG will:

- a. Hold meetings at least annually in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, respectively, to develop and agree upon the framework of actions;
- b. Undertake regular and continuous discussions including through communication via email, mobile telephone, video-conference and other relevant communication tools.

2. Organize work programs, develop strategies, provide technical assistance, undertake joint projects and perform other relevant activities;
3. Organize academic and technical programs related to environment and climate change;
4. Engage with international organizations, private sector and non-governmental organizations with due consideration of their importance to environmental programs and initiatives;
5. Share experience on environmental management including the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements to which countries are Parties.

Article 5

Information Exchange Methods

Data and information will be made available electronically in a format to be agreed on by the TWG, considering the available technical and organizational capacities, and will be exchanged online via email and other available means. Efforts will be made to ensure the evaluation, audit and quality control of the data and information.

Article 6

Practical Implementation of Data and Information Exchange

Practical implementation of data and information exchange within the framework of this MoU shall be carried out without charge. In cases that require resource-intensive data processing and synthesis, the Parties shall agree on cost-sharing arrangements for communications, fieldwork, participation in meetings and other expenses.

Article 7

Amendments

Any additions and amendments may be made to this MoU by a mutual written consent of the parties. Such additions and amendments shall enter into force in accordance with the procedures set forth in paragraph one (1) of article 9 of this MoU.

Article 8

Dispute Resolution

Any disputes arising out of the implementation and interpretation of this MoU shall be resolved amicably by negotiations and consultations between the Parties.

Article 9

Entry into force, duration, and termination

This MoU shall enter into force on the date of the receipt of the final written notification by which the Parties notify each other, through diplomatic channels, upon the completion of their internal legal procedures required for its entry into force.

This MoU shall remain in force for a period of 5 (Five) years and shall be automatically extended for successive periods of 5 (five) years, unless one of the Parties notifies the other in written through diplomatic channels of its intention to terminate the MoU at least 6 (six) months prior to its expiration.

Each Party is entitled to terminate this Agreement at any time by notifying the other Party in written through diplomatic channels. In this case, this MoU shall be terminated within 3 (three) months after the date of the receipt of the notification.

The termination of 'this MoU shall not affect the validity and implementation of the projects and activities agreed upon pursuant to the MoU and initiated prior to such termination, until their completion, unless the parties agree otherwise.

Signed in Dushanbe on 17th September, 2020 equivalent to 27/6/1399 *Hijri Shamsi* in two original copies, each in, Dari, Tajik, and English languages, all texts being equally authentic. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

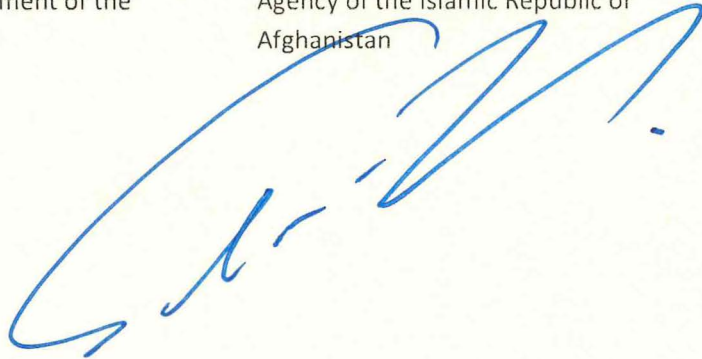
On Behalf of

The Committee on Environmental
Protection under the Government of the
Republic of Tajikistan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

On Behalf of

National Environmental Protection
Agency of the Islamic Republic of
Afghanistan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a large, sweeping initial 'A' followed by several smaller, connected loops.