

## **History of ECOSF and ECO Cooperation**

### **Origins and Evolution**

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was established to promote regional economic integration, sustainable development, and collective prosperity among its member states. Recognizing that science and technology are fundamental pillars of modern economic growth, ECO gradually placed greater emphasis on scientific cooperation as a means to address shared regional challenges and accelerate development.

The ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) emerged from this strategic vision as a specialized scientific institution dedicated to strengthening research capacity, advancing STEM education, and fostering innovation across the ECO region. Its origins lie in the collective realization among ECO member states that long-term regional progress requires coordinated investment in science, technology, and human capital.

In its early stages, scientific collaboration within ECO focused on knowledge exchange, academic networking, and the promotion of joint research initiatives. These efforts laid the groundwork for more structured scientific engagement and highlighted the need for a permanent platform to support regional research collaboration and policy alignment.

The establishment of ECOSF marked a turning point in ECO's approach to science and innovation. As an affiliated institution of ECO, ECOSF was mandated to promote excellence in scientific research, facilitate cross-border collaboration, support emerging scientists, and align regional scientific priorities with sustainable development goals. Over time, ECOSF expanded its role by launching research grants, capacity-building programs, science diplomacy initiatives, and regional STEM platforms.

As regional and global challenges evolved—ranging from climate change and energy security to digital transformation and public health—ECOSF adapted its strategic focus accordingly. The Foundation strengthened partnerships with universities, research centers, international organizations, and development agencies, reinforcing its position as a hub for scientific cooperation within the ECO framework.

Today, ECOSF stands as a symbol of the growing integration of science into regional policymaking and development strategies within ECO. Its evolution reflects the shared commitment of ECO member states to harness science as a driver of innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth. Through sustained cooperation, ECOSF continues to translate scientific knowledge into regional solutions, contributing to a more connected, knowledge-driven, and sustainable ECO region.