

Memorandum of Understanding
on
Environmental Cooperation
between
The Government of the United States of America
and
The Government of the Sultanate of Oman

The Government of the United States of America (“United States”) and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman (“Oman”) (hereinafter referred to collectively as “the Governments”),

Desiring to build on the long history of friendship and cooperation between their countries, and

Recognizing the importance of strengthening capacity to protect the environment while promoting sustainable development in concert with the expanded bilateral trade relationship that will accompany the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement (“FTA”); and

Affirming their intent to pursue efforts to enhance bilateral environmental cooperation,

Have reached the understandings contained herein:

Section 1. Objective

The Governments intend to cooperate in the field of environmental and natural resource protection and sustainable development. The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter the “Memorandum”) is to identify environmental issues of mutual interest to the Governments and to establish a mechanism through which the Governments can pursue cooperative efforts in those areas.

Section 2. Joint Forum

1. To broaden and deepen effective cooperation on environmental issues, the Governments are establishing a Joint Forum on Environmental Cooperation (“Joint Forum”) composed of government representatives with environmental responsibilities designated by each Government and drawn from relevant government departments, agencies or ministries.
2. The Joint Forum is to meet within one year of the signing of the Memorandum, and as appropriate thereafter, to discuss ways in which the Governments can work together to strengthen the capacity of Oman to protect and conserve the environment. Among the topics to be considered by the Joint Forum are the development and implementation of science-based standards for the protection of the environment and human health; the promotion of sustainable development; and environmental issues of mutual policy interest to the Governments.

Section 3. Plan of Action

1. The Governments expect that the Joint Forum will develop a Plan of Action; review and assess cooperative environmental activities undertaken pursuant to the Plan of Action; recommend ways to improve cooperation; and undertake such other activities as the Governments may deem to be appropriate. In the Plan of Action, the Joint Forum should identify priority projects for environmental cooperation guided by the subject areas set forth in the Annex to this Memorandum. Recognizing that the Governments may identify new cooperative priorities in the light of changing circumstances, the Joint Forum may update the Plan of Action as appropriate.
2. The Governments may cooperate on environmental matters by:
 - a. Facilitating exchanges of professionals, technicians, and specialists, including study visits, to promote the development of environmental policies and standards;
 - b. Organizing joint conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, training sessions and outreach and education programs;
 - c. Supporting collaborative projects and demonstrations, including joint research projects, studies and reports;

- d. Facilitating linkages among representatives of academia, industry, and government to promote the exchange of best practices and environmental information and data likely to be of interest to the Governments;
 - e. Sharing information on national environmental programs; and
 - f. Engaging in such other activities as the Governments consider appropriate.
3. Each Government intends to name a Principal Coordinator to serve as an overall point of contact regarding the activities of the Joint Forum and implementation of the Plan of Action.
 4. The Governments intend to work together to monitor and report on the environmental outcomes of their cooperative activities.

Section 4. Coordination with Other Bodies

The Governments recognize the obligations undertaken in the environment chapter of the U.S.-Oman FTA, and the role of the Joint Committee established in Chapter X, or any subcommittee on environmental affairs to be established thereunder, in supervising the implementation of the environment chapter of the FTA. In conducting its work, the Joint Forum should consider any views and recommendations of the Joint Committee, or any relevant subcommittee established under the FTA. The Governments look forward to the ways in which the work of the Joint Committee and of the Joint Forum can inform both entities.

Section 5. Public Participation

1. The Joint Forum should promote the development of opportunities for public participation in cooperative projects.
2. Each Government should solicit, and take into account as appropriate, the views of its public with respect to the Plan of Action and should review and respond to such communications in accordance with its own domestic procedures.

Section 6. Resources

The Governments recognize the importance of making resources available to implement the cooperative environmental activities approved by the Joint Forum. All cooperative activities undertaken pursuant to the Joint Forum's Plan of Action are conditioned upon the availability of appropriated funds and are subject to the applicable laws and regulations of the United States and Oman.

Section 7. Facilitating Entry of Equipment and Personnel

Each Government intends to take appropriate steps, where possible, to assist the other Government in meeting requirements for the entry of equipment, materials and personnel related to this Memorandum into its territory, subject to its laws and regulations.

Section 8. Discontinuation

Either Government may discontinue cooperation under this Memorandum of Understanding at any time, but that Government should inform the other Government in writing six months in advance. The Governments should then consult to determine any remaining action to be taken on ongoing and future cooperative activities included in the Plan of Action.

Signed at _____, this _____ day of _____, 2006,
in duplicate in the English language.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
SULTANATE OF OMAN:

ANNEX

SELECTED AREAS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION

The following subject areas reflect priorities for environmental cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman.

Environmental Laws and Regulations

- Strengthening the capacity to develop, update, implement, and enforce environmental laws and regulations.

Environmental Impact Assessments

- Improving capacity to conduct and review environmental impact assessments and to perform appropriate follow-up activities such as environmental auditing.

Environmental Incentives

- Encouraging cleaner production, compliance assistance, and other non-regulatory mechanisms to contribute to the achievement and maintenance of high levels of environmental protection.

Public Participation in Environmental Protection

- Promoting public participation in environmental protection efforts and public access to information and access to justice on environmental issues and sharing experience regionally.

Integrated Water Resources Management and Protection

- Sharing research and strategies to promote water conservation, re-use, watershed management, and the replenishment of aquifers.

Coastal Protection and Preservation of Marine Resources

- Protecting coastal environmental zones and estuaries and preventing the over-exploitation of living and nonliving marine resources.

Protected Area Management and Conservation of Flora and Fauna

- Integrating ecotourism with protection of flora and fauna, including sea turtles and other migratory or endangered species.

Cleaner Production and Environmental Technology

- Strengthening capacity to establish a Cleaner Production Center and promoting the growth of the environmental technology business sector.

Chemical and Hazardous Waste Management and Disposal

- Capacity building in chemical management and risk assessment, as well as in inspecting and monitoring hazardous waste facilities.

Environmental Disaster Preparedness

- Sharing experience in the review and preparation of contingency mechanisms for oil spills and other environmental disasters.