

EU-Central Asia Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation

6th Meeting of the WG on Environmental Governance and Climate Change

10-11 July 2017, Astana, Kazakhstan

Discussion paper

On

Capacity building/training needs

Background

Main outcome of the 5th meeting of the WG, Brussels, 15-16 December 2016

Based on the Joint Declaration of the EU-CA High Level Ministerial Conference in Milan in October 2015, the Action Plan for the Platform for 2017-2018 was developed, subsequently discussed and approved by the 5th meeting of the EU-CA Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (WGECC) held in Brussels on 15-16 December 2016. The Action Plan has the following 4 main priorities for the EU-Central Asia Dialogue on environment and climate change:

- 1. Strengthened institutional commitments to multilateral environmental agreements through adherence to international conventions with particular attention paid to implementation.
- 2. Improved environment and water infrastructure, access to climate financing and eco-innovation
- 3. Enhanced regional and transboundary cooperation in CA
- 4. Improved capacity of main stakeholders in CA

The main EU-CA high profile regional meetings planned in 2017-2018 in support of the above priorities are listed below:

- 6th EU-CA WGECC meeting on 10-11 July 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan
- 7th EU-CA WGECC meeting in February 2018 (venue & date TBC)
- 8th EU-CA WGECC meeting in June 2018 (venue & date TBC)
- EU-CA High Level (Ministerial) Meeting in Central Asia in Nov 2018 (venue & date TBC)

Purpose of this discussion paper

This paper provides suggestions regarding the implementation of the above Priority 4 of the EU-Central Asia Dialogue, i.e. 'Improved capacity of main stakeholders in CA: Key capacity building/training needs'.

This paper is based on preliminary consultations conducted by the consultants of the WECOOP2 project with the representatives of the CA countries, IFAS, UNEP, GIZ, CAREC, ADB, WB and EBRD during the period November 2016 to May 2017.

Analysis

Capacity building/training needs in CA

Capacity building and training in the recent years have been an integral part of numerous internationally funded projects to support water, agricultural, environmental and energy sectors of CA countries. They have been provided by the WB, ADB, EU, GIZ, USAID, UNECE, SDC, UN Environment, UNDP, EBRD, OECD.

These capacity building and training activities helped to address the CA countries needs in improving their knowledge, understanding and professional skills in a number of sectors, including Integrated Water Resources Management, Shared Environment Information Systems, River Basin Management, Water Productivity and Water Efficiency, Water Supply and Sanitation, Waste Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Environmental Management, Green Economy,

and Climate Change.

However, it remains difficult to measure how these training/capacity building programmes have facilitated the adoption and further implementation of the underlined national policy reforms and realisation of the regional agenda. This is partly due to a rather high turnover of staff in several CA countries. Donors have also conducted similar trainings at various times but have not succeeded in establishing sustainable programmes for training the trainers (ToT).

Also, in the last three years the CA countries were hit by the economic and financial crisis caused by the dramatic fall in oil and commodity prices. To deal with consequences, the CA countries are increasingly looking for investment and technological innovations to improve natural resources and energy efficiency to encourage economic growth and to respond to the challenges of the climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The search for investment in CA creates an increasing need for capacity building/training that help to *catalyse investments* by improving knowledge, understanding and professional skills in the following areas:

- access to funding and preparation of good investment projects for consideration by IFIs;
- factors and diagnostic tools that help in the design of investment programmes;
- cross-sectoral and cross-country planning, including applicable examples of international best practice;
- facilitation of exchange of good practice experiences and knowledge of what works among various relevant stakeholders across the CA region.

What will be practically proposed to the countries of CA in session 3 of the 6th meeting of the WG on 11 July 2017?

Considering the above, the following course of action is suggested for session #3 on improvement of regional cooperation:

Presentations by various stakeholders outlining not only the key capacity building/training needs required to catalyse the investments, but also key points for allowing subsequent discussions and suggestions for making capacity building/training in CA more focused and result-oriented.

- Identification of an explicit list of essential training/capacity building needs.
- Feedback from IFIs and donors indicating which training of the list they could practically provide.
- ***Feedback from all stakeholders concerning the relevance and opportunity to establish a Regional Central Asia Centre of Excellence¹ in project design, financing and Public Private Partnership.***

¹ An acceleration in infrastructure investment is fundamental to address the infrastructure gaps in most of the countries of the region and to reignite growth and job creation. In addition, stronger attention must be paid to the sustainability of infrastructure investments and the quality of the services they provide to citizens. Involving the private sector in the delivery of infrastructure services is also necessary. A strong acceleration of infrastructure investment is currently beyond the financial reach of most governments in many countries. A number of factors are hampering the involvement of the private sector in infrastructure investment. Among these are: limited capacity, insufficient resources and expertise in project design, financing and PPP; weak legal and financial frameworks. Setting in place a permanent Centre of Excellence in the region has the potential to increase the number of good projects submitted to IFIs for financing and could unblock as well a number of PPP projects in Central Asia.