

**Regional Environment Programme for Central Asia – EURECA (2009) –  
Decision DCI-ASIE/2009/021-337**

***Regional Coordination and Support for the EU-CA Enhanced Regional  
Cooperation on Environment and Water: WECOOP***

Identification No.: Europeaid/130-954/C/SER/Multi

***Final Report***

***Service Contract Number: 262-949  
February 2012 to July 2014***



***This Project is Funded by the European Union***



***This project is implemented by Landell Mills Ltd  
in consortium with GITEC and BARS  
Consulting.***

*Report submitted by*  
**LANDELL MILLS LTD**

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## Project Summary Sheet

<b>Name of Project:</b>	<i>Regional Coordination and Support for the EU-CA Enhanced Regional Cooperation on Environment and Water: WECOOP. Europeaid/130-954/C/SER/Multi</i>
<b>Service Contract No:</b>	262-949
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<b>Start/End Date:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2012 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2014
<b>Budget:</b>	EUR 1,496,320
<b>Beneficiary:</b>	Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Republic of Uzbekistan with Observer Status
<b>Primary Location:</b>	Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan
<b>Secondary Locations:</b>	Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Republic of Uzbekistan
<b>Project Objectives:</b>	The Overall Objective of the project is to promote and support enhanced regional cooperation on environment and water both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asia as called for by the EU-Central Asia Strategy.
<b>Purpose:</b>	To support the development, effectiveness and visibility of the Environment and Water Cooperation Platform aiming at facilitating enhanced regional cooperation both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asia, through support to regular high-level meetings and joint expert working groups or other ad-hoc events, and through support to the strengthening of regional institutions responsible for environment and water issues.
<b>Key Results:</b>	<i>Result 1: A programme of work for the Platform has been established and related activities have been taking place. Result 2: Frameworks for cooperation between Central Asian countries have been enhanced. Result 3: Communication/mapping/networking are ensured and effective where appropriate.</i>

### DISTRIBUTION LIST

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Ms. Alia Baidebekova, Project Manager, EU Delegation, Astana	1 Original and 1 Copy	English and Russian Language Vers.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE STATEMENT

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AO	<i>Administrative Order</i>
ASBP 2	<i>Aral Sea Basin Programme 3 (current programme under EC IFAS)</i>
BWO	<i>River Basin Organisation (Amu Darya and Syr Darya)</i>
CA	<i>Central Asia</i>
CACILM	<i>Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management</i>
CAREC	<i>Central Asia Region Environment Centre</i>
CDM	<i>Clean Development Mechanism</i>
CSVP	<i>communications strategy and visibility plan (CSVP)</i>
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
EC IFAS	<i>Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea</i>
ENP	<i>European National Partners</i>
EPR	<i>Environmental Performance Reviews</i>
EU	<i>European Union</i>
EURECA	<i>European Union Regional Environment Programme for Central Asia</i>
EUWI	<i>European Union Water Initiative</i>
GEF	<i>Global Environment Facility</i>
GHG	<i>Greenhouse Gases</i>
ICSD	<i>Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD)</i>
ICWC	<i>Interstate Commission for Water Coordination</i>
IFAS	<i>International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea</i>
IMELS	<i>Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea</i>
IPPC	<i>Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control</i>
JI	<i>Joint Implementation</i>
MRV	<i>Monitoring, Reporting and Verification</i>
NAMA	<i>Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions</i>
NCAP	<i>The National Caspian Action Plan</i>
NEAP	<i>National Environmental Action Plan</i>
NPF	<i>National Programming Framework</i>
QUELRO	<i>Quantified Emission Limitation Or Reduction Objective</i>
REAP	<i>Regional Environmental Action Plan</i>
SIC	<i>Scientific and Information Centre (of ICWC and ICSD)</i>
TNA	<i>Training Needs Assessment</i>
UNCCD	<i>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</i>
UNECE	<i>United Nations Economic Council for Europe</i>
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
WECOOP	<i>Water and Environment Cooperation Platform</i>
WG-EGCC	<i>Working Group on Environmental Governance and Climate Change</i>

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## 1. PROJECT SYNOPSIS

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### 1.1 Overall Objective

*'To promote and support enhanced regional cooperation on environment and water both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asia as called for by the EU CA Strategy'.*

### 1.2 Project Purpose

*'To support the development, effectiveness and visibility of the Environment and Water Cooperation Platform aiming at facilitating enhanced regional cooperation both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asia, through support to regular high-level meetings and joint expert working groups or other ad-hoc events, and through support to strengthening of regional institutions responsible for environment and water issues'.*

### 1.3 Project Results

*'The **overall expected result** is an increasingly effective and active EU-CA Platform for Co-operation on Environment and Water'.*

The **specific expected results** are:

#### **Component 1: EU-CA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation**

*A programme of work for the Platform has been established and related activities have been taking place. This includes:*

- Regular High-Level meetings between EU and Central Asia (once a year in principle);
- Regular joint expert working group meetings on environmental governance and climate change (at least once a year), in close collaboration with Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea;
- Multilateral events, conferences, workshops, seminars, policy briefings and other discussion platforms, as agreed with EU Member states and/or Central Asian partners.

#### **Component 2: Strengthening of institutional and development capacities of the regional institutions**

*Frameworks for cooperation between Central Asian countries have been enhanced and the institutional and development capacities of existing regional institutions (in particular EC IFAS and other IFAS technical bodies) have been strengthened, in close collaboration with ongoing initiatives and processes.*

#### **Component 3: Communication/mapping/networking**

*Communication/mapping/networking is ensured and effective where appropriate. This includes:*

- Enhanced visibility of the EU–CA cooperation on environment and water;
- Coordination and synergies between EURECA components;
- Coordination and synergies between EURECA and other EU platforms established under the 'EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership';
- Coordination and synergies between EURECA and other EU-funded projects in CA (in particular projects funded under the Energy Natural Resources Thematic Programme (ENRTP) or Framework Programme (FP));
- Coordination and synergies between projects in CA and in ENP countries.

## 1.4 Target Groups

The Terms of Reference identified key stakeholders at three different levels:

- **At a national level:** national coordination units, national ministries and government agencies responsible for environment and water management, ministries of foreign affairs, presidential administrations or cabinets of ministers, parliamentary committees, representatives of the civil society including NGOs and the private sector;
- **At a regional level:** inter-state regional institutions (IFAS as a whole and its sub-bodies, in particular); the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC);
- **At an international community level:** EU Member states, the European Environmental Agency, as well as key international donor or implementing agencies and international financial institutions active in the sector and in the region.

## 2. Executive Summary

The project 'Regional Coordination and Support for the EU – CA Enhanced Regional Cooperation on Environment and Water (WECOOP)' was implemented from the 1st February 2012 to 31st July 2014. The project was implemented by Landell Mills (UK) in consortium with GITEC (Germany) and BARS (Tajikistan).

The goal of the project was to promote and support enhanced regional cooperation on environment, climate change and water matters both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asia, as called for by the EU-CA Strategy. The project purpose was to support the development, effectiveness and visibility of the Environment and Water Cooperation Platform aimed at facilitating enhanced regional cooperation both between the EU and Central Asia and within Central Asia, through support to regular high-level meetings and joint expert working groups or other ad-hoc events, and through support to strengthening of regional institutions responsible for environment and water issues.

No changes were made to the overall budget of EUR1,496,320 which included an allowance for Incidental Expenditure of EUR500,000.

### Reporting Cycle

During the Inception phase, from February 2012 to July 2012, the project team updated the project work plan on the basis of direct consultation with all key project partners. A communication and visibility plan was developed and working relationships with beneficiaries, partners and other projects in the project countries were established.

Report Period	Notable Events
<b>August 2012 – January 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second Working Group Meeting</li> <li>- High Level Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>February 2013 to July 2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study Tour to First European Conference on Climate Change;</li> <li>- Regional training on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Climate Change &amp; Risk Management</li> </ul>
<b>August 2013 to January 2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Green Economy regional training event 'Through the Green Economy to Sustainable Development'.</li> <li>- National training on EIA and SEA in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.</li> </ul>
<b>February 2014 to July 2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National training on EIA and SEA in Turkmenistan;</li> <li>- European Union – Central Asia Regional Seminar in Brussels</li> <li>- 3rd Working Group Meeting in Almaty</li> <li>- Climate Coalition Seminar</li> <li>- Central Asian Youth Environmental Network Seminar</li> </ul>

Networks with relevant national stakeholders and international partners were strengthened, a detailed Project Work Plan, Communication and Visibility Plan was updated and agreed with the EU Delegation and shared with key stakeholders. The project website [www.wecoop-project.org](http://www.wecoop-project.org) was continually updated throughout the project implementation period.



## **Key Recommendations**

### **a) Working Group**

- It would be beneficial if members of the Working Group were appointed on a formal basis for a minimum period of 2 years to improve continuity;
- The Working Group agenda needs greater focus and emphasis on tangible results. Outputs and responsibilities should be more clearly defined;
- More regular contact between the Working Group members is required in order to strengthen the link between the High Level Meetings and the Working Group agenda.
- National level communication plans are required to strengthen feedback mechanisms to Working Group members at a national level;
- A Continuing Professional Development programme for Working Group members would be beneficial and would enhance the benefit of cooperation.

### **b) NGOs**

- A modest 'challenge fund' scheme or similar mechanism could be used to encourage regional NGOs, educational institutions or other relevant partners to develop proposals for regional environmental cooperation projects on a competitive basis and linked to the Working Group agenda/priorities;
- Strengthened links amongst NGOs in the Central Asian region would be beneficial;
- The continued role of NGOs in awareness raising and educational activities should be considered.

### **c) Management**

- Green economy, climate change, water and environment cooperation remain common regional concerns and validate continued support;
- The regional institutional framework for cooperation on environment, water and climate change needs continued support;
- Working Group Focal points in each country would help to improve communication and address logistical issues;
- Specific indicators of achievement for the Working Group, allocation of responsibility and scheduling would be valuable.

### **d) Training**

Enhanced experience, practice, regulations and guidelines concerning EIA and transboundary EIA as well as SEA, which is harmonised with those applied in the EU, would be beneficial throughout the Central Asia region.

Capacity-building amongst decision-makers and technical officers could be further developed at a national level, focusing on specific policy, technology, governance and operational needs. In particular, strengthening leadership and governance skills.

In-depth national training seminars on green economy priority sectors have been requested by project participants. Suggested topics for such training sessions include: energy; sustainable/organic agriculture; water management (including application of the virtual water concept), etc; the use of the debt-for-nature approach to alleviate indebtedness in some CA countries; and green/sustainable public procurement green tax, subsidy and budget reforms. A roadmap to a resource efficient and ecosystem resilient CA along the lines of a similar effort made in the EU was also considered of potential value.

## **Communication and Institutional Aspects**

Based on feedback from project participants, further recommendations included:

- Hold a regional seminar to promote EIA and the establishment of a network of EIA experts in Central Asian countries;
- Advocate the environment within other sectors and establish effective inter-institutional coordination mechanisms e.g. meteorological services (warning systems), transport (air quality control in urban centres, access roads to health clinics and hospitals), disaster risk management, environment, agriculture, energy;
- Carry out and/or update health vulnerability assessments and measures identifying the most vulnerable social groups according to their levels of exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity. Translate these into policy and implementation actions;
- Develop increased awareness of the potential risks associated with climate change amongst public health sector staff and policy-makers, and provide capacity-building, as required, based on a training needs assessment;
- Rearrange and redesign the existing programs and potential projects related to climate change adaptation and mitigation according to the requirements of the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund and other funds, international organisations, and carbon standards. This would help to attract financing to these projects and programs;
- Prepare and sign bilateral agreements on adaptation and mitigation programs;
- Hold additional seminars at a national level focusing at public participation in EIA.

## **Conclusions**

There has been good co-operation between the project and partners in the Central Asian countries, the Italian chair of the environment platform, European External Action Services and the EU Delegation in Astana. The project has been able to organise and conduct important training and events, enhanced communications, networking and information exchange in areas relates to water, the environment and climate change. Given the nature of the issues being addressed, long-term continued and further support is required to support regional cooperation on environment and climate change. Many important lessons have been learnt during project implementation and these should be very beneficial for future cooperation activities. The cycle of Working Group and High Level meetings has been sustained throughout the 30-month project period and a commitment to further meetings in 2015 established.

### 3. Review of Progress and Performance at Completion

#### 3.1 Component 1: The EU-CA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation

The **key activities** undertaken in relation to Component 1 include:

- a) Working Group on environmental governance and climate change meetings were held in close collaboration with the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) in Almaty on 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and on 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014;
- b) High Level Conference held in Bishkek on 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013;
- c) Participation in multilateral events, including workshops, seminars.

##### 3.1.1 Provision of Support to Working Group Meetings

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Working Group Meeting was held in Almaty 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The Meeting was chaired by Mr Massimo Cozzone of IMELS and co-chaired by Mr Marlen Iskakov of Ministry of Environment (MoE) of Kazakhstan.

##### a) Working Group Membership

Official invitations to potential participants were issued by IMELS. The members of the WG EGCC were officially nominated by each participating country/government. The project team communicated with nominated experts informing them of the objectives and expected outcome of the meeting. IMELS also sent invitations to other partners and to EU Member States through the official channels of COEST (and WPIEI) in Brussels.

##### b) Meeting Attendance

There were 86 participants at the Second WG Meeting including:

- Central Asian partner countries:	18
- Regional organisations:	10
- EU Member States, including IMELS:	28
- International organisations:	11
- Eurostat Workshop:	30
- WECOOP:	5

##### d) Working Group Documents and Presentations

The Meeting Agenda included three sessions:

1. Review of EU Strategies and proposed activities;
2. Strategic planning of environmental management; and
3. Climate change mitigation: strategies and priorities.

The reports and statements of representatives from the Central Asian states, EU and international organisations discussed the following topics:

- The policy and main areas of cooperation between the European Union and the five Central Asian countries;
- A review of environmental policy and environment governance in the European Union;
- A review of UNECE environmental conventions and agreements;

- A review of EU and international community climate change adaptation policies and initiatives;
- Mapping of international environmental projects in Central Asia, including those related to climate change;
- Progress report on the implementation of major international environment management and governance projects including those related to climate change adaptation in Central Asia;
- Presentation of programs and projects to support regional cooperation, environment management and governance, and climate change adaptation that are proposed and carried out in Central Asia.

#### **e) Conclusions of the Second Working Group Meeting**

In the course of follow-up discussions, the meeting drafted a set of conclusions. The conclusions are based on a summary of the presentations made by national experts and publications of international environmental projects that are being implemented in the region. The conclusions reflect the position of the key national agencies that are responsible for environmental management, including the Kazakhstan Ministry of Environmental Protection, the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the Environmental Protection Committee with the Government of Tajikistan, the Turkmenistan Ministry of Nature Protection, and the State Committee for Nature of Uzbekistan.

- The importance of mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral policies was highlighted;
- Emphasis was placed on the need to further improve regional environmental information and knowledge exchange, including public access to environmental information;
- The selection of thematic areas for action such as pollution and climate change, water ecosystems, including biodiversity and desertification could pave the way for demonstrating the benefits of enhanced institutional cooperation and information sharing between Central Asian countries;
- Sound environmental policy should be based on conservation and the rational use of natural resources. A good knowledge base, effective environmental monitoring systems and consideration being given to scientific, economic and social aspects were all identified as important aspects of environmental legislation and policy-making;
- The importance of ratification of relevant (sub-) regional and multilateral environment agreements was especially highlighted, as well as the development of existing Environmental Strategies, such as the Regional EAP, with the EU support for their implementation;
- The importance of improving institutional frameworks and technical capacity to enhance environmental governance and to manage risks and opportunities related to climate change was highlighted. The adoption of a networking approach, the participation by civil society in environmental policy formulation and the development of transparency and accountability mechanisms at a national and regional level was highlighted;
- The participants called for better cooperation with existing mechanisms such as the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development for Central Asia, its Public Council and Youth Network as well as with the Green Bridge initiative to raise awareness and build capacity in sustainable development and resource efficiency. The participants also welcomed the establishment of the Central Asia NGO network on sustainable energy, natural resources and climate change.
- The participants agreed that increased awareness and immediate actions are needed to mitigate the effects of climate change and to develop and enforce policies that will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to further explore the use of renewable resources. Efforts to

increase energy efficiency, in particular, in the industry and housing sectors, should also be considered as well.

- The participants agreed on the importance of developing National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and National Appropriate Plans for Adaptation (NAPAs) by taking into consideration the specific national conditions, the national strategies for sustainable development and the priorities of the Central Asian countries.

As **follow-up to the Working Group Meeting** it was proposed that expert meetings should be held to consider the following topics:

- Information networks and SEIS;
- Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Impact Assessment;
- Green economy;
- Civil society and environmental governance;
- Development of National Adaptation Strategies;
- Climate change mitigation policies and programmes.

The Working Group (WG) documents, including Conclusions, Meeting Agenda, speaker presentations were disseminated amongst the participants, partner projects and uploaded to the project website.

#### **f) Conclusions of the 3rd Working Group Meeting**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Group Meeting was held in Almaty 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The Meeting was chaired by Mr Massimo Cozzone of IMELS and co-chaired by Mr Bektas Mukhamedjanov of the MoE of Kazakhstan.

#### **g) Working Group Membership**

IMELS issued official invitations which were sent to the embassies of the respective governments via diplomatic channels. The Technical Secretariat invited representatives of the regional organisations and NGOs. The members of the WG EGCC were officially nominated by each participating country/government. The project team communicated with the heads of the national delegations informing them of the objectives and expected outcome of the meeting. IMELS also sent invitations to other partners and to EU Members States.

#### **h) Meeting Attendance**

There were 69 participants at the Third WG Meeting, including

- Central Asian partner countries: 16
- EU Member States, including IMELS: 8
- Regional organisations: 10
- International organisations: 19
- NGOs: 10
- WECOOP: 6

#### **i) Working Group Documents and Presentations**

The Meeting Agenda included six sessions including:

1. Lessons learnt from EU – Central Asia Platform activities - State and Future of CA Environment and Water;
2. Environmental monitoring and information systems/SEIS;

3. EU – CA climate change strategies and policies;
4. Through the Green Economy to Sustainable Development;
5. Cooperation and synergies with international partners and NGOs;
6. Work programme.

The reports and statements of representatives from the Central Asian states, EU and international organisations discussed the following topics:

- General priorities and proposals for regional cooperation;
- The state of environmental monitoring and latest developments in the application of SEIS in CA;
- Future activities and projects for Central Asia;
- EU and CA country strategies for climate change;
- EU policy and practical examples of green economy development and opportunities for Central Asian countries in transition to a green economy;
- Regional activities related to environmental governance, climate change, and green economy;
- Activities and the role of the civil society in the region working with governmental institutions to shape policies: best practice and lessons learnt;
- Activities to be carried out at regional and national levels and on the next steps for the implementation of the Platform.

Representatives of the Central Asian countries, EU Delegation in Astana, European External Action Services, IMELS, regional organisations and NGOs drafted conclusions. The conclusions are based on the summaries of the presentations made by the participants and reflect the positions of the national delegations, EU, IMELS, and NGOs.

The conclusions of the Working Group included:

- The leading role of the EU in the build-up to the December 2015 climate change ‘Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC’ in Paris and acknowledged the commitment of the EU toward such a global agreement;
- The benefits associated with a transition to a green economy at a national and regional level and the need for further pilot projects, training and sharing examples of international best practice;
- The need to strengthen cooperation in the field of environmental protection between the various sectors at a national level as this was a common need across all countries which would benefit from a regional approach in relation to capacity building, international experience and know-how;
- The importance of good data and information to support national decision-making, policy formulation, regional cooperation and participation in international conventions;
- That pilot projects have the potential to strengthen and deepen regional cooperation;
- Agreed that cooperation in information exchange would continue at both national and regional levels underpinned *inter alia* by SEIS principles and in partnership with the EEA and existing structures working under the UNECE, UNEP and other international and regional initiatives;
- Agreed on the importance of further development and enhancement of regional cooperation on the basis of existing regional structures such as IFAS and its bodies (Executive Committee of IFAS, ICWC, ICSD, etc.), CAREC and other relevant organisations.
- Proposed to strengthen engagement of civil society in regional policy formulation and programme implementation in fields such as environmental education, awareness-raising and sustainable development;
- Proposed to hold more regular meetings, thematic discussions, training, round tables and use other mechanisms to intensify dialogue between the Central Asian countries and EU;
- Requested technical assistance from the EU in relation to methodologies and best practice reflecting the need the establishment of an inventory of GHG emissions.

The WG documents, including Conclusions, Meeting Agenda, presentations of speakers from the participating countries and other WG participants were disseminated among participants, partner projects and uploaded to the project website.

### **3.1.2 Provision of Support to High Level Conference**

#### **a) The Fourth High Level Meeting**

The Fourth High Level Conference was held in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) on 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February 2013. The Conference was chaired by Ms. Marta Dassu, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, Ms. Patricia Flor, European Union Special Representative for Central Asia, and co-chaired by Mr. Tayrbek Sarpashev, Vice Prime Minister, Kyrgyz Republic.

#### **b) High Level Conference Participants**

Official invitations to potential participants were issued by European External Action Service (Brussels) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy (Rome) through the official channels of COEST (and WPIEI) in Brussels. Members of the CA delegations were officially nominated by each participating country/government. The project team maintained communication with delegations and provided them with relevant documents.

#### **c) High Level Conference Attendance**

The attendance at the High Level Conference included:

- Central Asian partner countries:	25
- EU Member States:	44
- Regional organisations:	9
- Civil Society:	5
- Media	12
- WECOOP:	3

#### **d) High Level Conference Documents and Presentations**

Conference attendees included representatives of the key national agencies that are responsible for environmental management, including the Kazakhstan Ministry of Environmental Protection, the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the Environmental Protection Committee with the Government of Tajikistan, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the State Committee for Nature Protection of Uzbekistan; EU representatives; representatives of international organisations supporting environmental activities in the region; regional and non-governmental organisations; and invited stakeholders.

The Meeting Agenda included:

- Opening session;
- Session 1: EU-Central Asia Strategy: Platform for Environment and Water: taking stock of the last years of cooperation;
- Session 2: Environmental governance: international tools and framework
- Session 3: Climate Change: mitigation and adaptation
- Session 4: Water cooperation issues
- Closing of the Conference.

At the Conference, representatives from the Central Asian states, EU and international organisations discussed a broad range of topics related to environmental governance, climate change and management of water resources.

The Conference was split in two parts but with both devoted to implementation of the EU CA Platform for enhanced cooperation:

- Part one included sessions 1 to 3 which aimed to take stock of preceding year of cooperation on environmental governance and climate change.
- Part two included session 4, participants discussed issues related to cooperation in the water sector.

The reports and statements of representatives from the EU and international organisations discussed various issues related to environmental governance and climate change included the following topics:

- The EU noted that it shared the concerns of its Central Asian partners in facing environmental challenges which need to be addressed by each national government, institution and civil society. All such challenges are shared across borders and the EU has unique experience in bringing together different partners to meet the same goals. It was also agreed that all partners would do their best to share experience, to put in place a mechanism to enhance dialogue, to take stock of processes, and to promote cooperation on key issues between the EU, EU Member states and the five partners from Central Asia;
- It was stressed that the key topics of the discussions are environmental integration and environmental governance. These are the key to any sustainable economic policy. However, bringing actors together to examine the consequences of decisions on sustainable use of resources and maintenance of appropriate ecological balance is a complex process;
- The participants also noted that it was a priority for partners to join forces to combat climate change and mitigate its impact. This is an ever-evolving process. Central Asia will face severe consequences from climate change if they are not addressed. This is also a cornerstone of regional dialogue;
- The need to take into account population growth, lack of experience and capacity in the development of strategies and mitigation measures, the consequences of climate change, glaciers melting, the consequential decreasing water availability, and the need to reflect these facts in the future EU Programme;
- The importance of involving civil society in social and economic activities, exchange information with non-commercial civil organisations, and sharing information between these organisations regionally was also highlighted;
- Delegates from the Central Asian states specifically mentioned that the main focus of partners should be on improving project effectiveness. There is a need for specific concrete technical measures to be undertaken.

Session 4 was devoted to regional cooperation and international experience in water resource management. Speakers reported on the importance of cooperation, providing examples from the EU and noting that if the Central Asian states are convinced that something should be done, the Platform offers a number of models which can be used.

Participants stressed the importance of water management issues for Central Asia and the need to follow the international practice of implementing agreements confirming that the application of IWRM principles and the development of a green economy are the areas for cooperation. It was noted that the major factor for harmonious development is deepened and strengthened regional and international cooperation on the base of regional organizations as a platform applying the EU and EU member states experience.



At the end of the Conference, referring to the environmental governance, the importance of the following points was noted:

- The EU approach combined with improving the National Report on the state of environment and access to the best available technology and knowledge transfer;
- Implementation of Multilateral Agreements on the Environment;
- Provision of technical assistance for the development of low carbon Strategies and focus on energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources;
- Joint cooperation on post-Kyoto development and Rio+20, in particular the development of long term cooperation actions;
- Partnership development and strengthening of integration;
- Bottom-up approach and increasing the involvement of civil society.

The High Level Conference documents, including Communique, Meeting Agenda, Minutes, and presentations received from speakers were uploaded to the project website and circulated among participants and major stakeholders.

## **3.2 Component 2: Strengthening of Institutional Development Capacities of the Regional Institutions**

### **3.2.1 Component 2: Specific Expected Results**

*Frameworks for cooperation between Central Asian countries have been enhanced and the institutional and development capacities of existing regional institutions (in particular EC IFAS and other IFAS technical bodies) have been strengthened, in close collaboration with on-going initiatives and processes.*

### **3.2.2 Component 2 – Major Achievements**

#### **a) Assessment and Preparation of Capacity-Building Programme**

The current situation with regard to national and regional policy, national legal frameworks, regional initiatives in climate change and environment were investigated through the Inception Phase under the following headings:

- i. National and regional policy situation on climate change and environment;
- ii. Regional initiatives in climate change and environment;
- iii. National legal frameworks for climate change and environment;
- iv. Structure, legal framework and administrative capacity of the regional bodies;
- v. Training and education for capacity building.

The capacity needs were assessed and recommendations on its development were provided.

Several issues related to strengthening regional bodies were discussed with beneficiaries and stakeholders. The discussions concluded that regional coordination and cooperation on environment and water resources would be better served by improving the structure, the Charter, status and financial procedures of IFAS and its associated bodies. It was also highlighted that EC IFAS and its subordinated regional bodies require substantial improvement in their capacity to meet the challenges associated with implementation of ASBP-3.

Initially, a four stage awareness raising and capacity building programme was proposed:

1. Awareness raising through project participation in related regional events.
2. Awareness raising through discussion papers on relevant topics.
3. Preparing and conducting short training courses.
4. Supporting continuing education.

Within the framework of the EU – CA Platform for Environmental Governance, Climate Change and Water Cooperation and following the decisions of the Second Working Group Meeting (Almaty, 13 – 14 September, 2012) and the High Level Conference (Bishkek, 13 February, 2013), training was provided in Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, climate change, risk management and green economy.

It was agreed that trainees would be selected from the members of the Working Group on Environmental Governance and Climate Change and regional bodies, including IFAS and its bodies. National level trainees would comprise staff from ministries, including those from foreign affairs, the water and environment sectors, but also finance and economy.

#### **b) Study Tour**

In accordance with the ToR, a Study Tour to the First European Conference on Climate Change was organised. Officials and experts from four Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) participated in the Study Tour in Hamburg (Germany) 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March. The overall objective of the Study Tour was to inform high level officials responsible for environmental governance, climate change and water management in Central Asian organisations about opportunities to build climate resilience of vulnerable human systems, ecosystems and economies through the mobilisation of knowledge and technologies to support adaptation capacity building, policy-setting, planning and practices.

The specific objectives were as follows:

- Improve the availability and accessibility of knowledge relevant to adaptation and enhance dissemination of information on good adaptation practices;
- Strengthen targeted knowledge support and advisory services to governments, planners and practitioners;
- Enhance the capacity of developing country institutions working on adaptation.

The Conference emphasised understanding and assessing adaptation in practice, under the theme of 'integrating climate into action'. More than 700 scientists and practitioners working on climate change adaptation participated in the Conference. The Conference created a forum for bringing together world-class science, with the aim of fostering creative dialogue with climate adaptation policy makers and practitioners. There were more than 200 presentations made during the following 12 sessions:

1. Climate vulnerability assessment;
2. Risk assessment;
3. Economics of adaptation;
4. Decision-making under uncertainty;
5. Governance of adaptation;
6. Adaptation strategies and planning;
7. Mainstreaming climate adaptation;
8. Adaptation cases studies: organisational, sectoral and regional;
9. Monitoring and measuring adaptation;
10. Impact and effectiveness studies;
11. Role of tools and knowledge in adaptation;
12. Communicating impacts, vulnerability and adaptation.

A wrap-up meeting was organised for the participants from Central Asia to share views about the Conference. It was highlighted that even under the most optimistic greenhouse gas emission reduction scenarios, we are already facing a certain level of climate change. The first impacts of climate change are now observable internationally. These impacts create new risks and vulnerabilities whilst also generating opportunities. At the same time, whilst the need to manage climate vulnerabilities is now widely understood, questions about how and when to adapt are often hard to answer. New knowledge from science and practice is critical to making judgements, choices and decisions in the context of uncertainties.

Participants in their back-to-office reports informed their respective governments about experience and knowledge concerning transformation and adaptation technologies, and the range of mitigation measures already available at various sources in the EU member states. It was also noted that Central Asian states could use approaches, procedures and methodologies developed by the EU member states to support the development of their own strategies, policies, and plans.

#### **e) Training on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The seminars aimed to provide high level understanding of both EIA and SEA from both a legal and practical implementation perspective. The participants were trained to apply:

- Best practice from EU member states in conducting EIAs and SEAs;

- EIA and SEA procedures required by the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a transboundary Context (the Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The training seminars outlined how to enhance EIA and SEA procedures in Central Asia in-line with relevant EU standards. The importance of public participation in EIAs and SEAs, as stipulated in the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions, was also discussed.

The first Regional seminar to train trainers was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. The seminars on the national level were held in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 and in Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan, 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2013.

#### **f) Training in Climate Change and Risk Management in Central Asia**

Regional training of trainers was held in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) on June 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The purpose of the training was to acquaint regional experts and decision makers with international experience in the prevention and mitigation of climate change risks and to carry out practical actions in Central Asia at a national and local level.

Over 50 participants, including representatives from national, regional and international organisations working in the field of environmental protection, climate change and natural resources management, were trained.

The major objective of the training activity was to provide selected senior staff from environment ministries and agencies as well as experts from Central Asian countries with a better understanding of EU experience on financing and establishing the most appropriate enabling conditions for actions on adaptation to climate change and natural disasters. The secondary objective of the training activity was to inform participants about practical experience on financing and lessons learned from the projects implemented.

The following topics were covered during the training:

- Impact of climate change on agriculture, energy and other sectors of economy in CA;
- Risks to health resulting from natural disasters caused by the climate change and mitigation mechanisms;
- Application of EU experience and understanding of technologies available to increase the sustainability of agriculture, energy and environmental sector;
- Adaptation of economics, including industries, agriculture, communal services, and public health in Central Asia to climate change. Practical actions and available technologies for pilot cases;
- Global warming and climate change forecast for Central Asia: impact on environment and water in Central Asia;
- Climate change and natural disasters in Central Asia;
- Risk Mitigation Measures: Development and Implementation.

#### **g) Regional Green Economy Training Seminar**

The Regional Seminar on Green Economy was held in Astana on 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> November 2013. This was the first seminar in the Region devoted to the green economy.

The objective of the Seminar was to support the development and implementation of green economy strategies for sustainable development in Central Asian countries. The secondary objective was to inform Central Asian experts about EU and worldwide experience in relation to the transition to a green economy.

The seminar attendees included representatives of key national agencies responsible for environmental management, economics, and foreign affairs, including the Kazakhstan Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, and the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan; EU representatives; representatives of international organizations supporting environmental activities in the region; regional and non-governmental organizations.

The following topics were covered during the Seminar:

- Introduction to Green Economy theories and principles;
- Natural capital and ecosystem services for a green economy;
- Green growth policies and strategies;
- Green Economy in EU - policy and case studies;
- Success stories on green growth in Asia-Pacific region;
- Green taxes and budget reforms;
- Green procurement as an incentive for greening economy;
- Assessment of strategies and framework for a green economy in Central Asia;
- Analysis of case studies and success stories on green economy strategies and policies;
- Analysis of green economy challenges and opportunities for Central Asia countries;
- Overview of current international efforts to define and use green economy indicators, including green growth indicators.

Examples of successful green growth/green economy strategies and plans in EU member states and the Asia-Pacific region, including supportive institutional mechanisms, were considered. The application of concrete green growth/green economy policies, including green taxes and subsidy reforms and Payment of Ecosystem Services, the ESCAP framework for quality of growth indicators were considered and explained. A special session was held to consider innovation and technological advancement.

#### **h) Kazakhstan National Water Management Programme. Round Table Discussion**

The Republic of Kazakhstan has already experienced problems due to water scarcity. According to the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, the country will face strong water shortages of 50% of predicted demand by 2040.

According to the Government's plan to implement the 'Concept of Transition to a Green Economy', a Draft State Programme of Water Resources Management for 2014-2040 was developed. Given the strategic importance of water for the entire Central Asian region, public and scientific organisations, including the National Council of the Global Water Partnership, proposed to hold an open discussion of the Draft Programme.

The Round Table Public Discussion of the Draft Water Management Programme for Kazakhstan for 2014–2040 was supported by the WECOOP project, the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources and the National Council of the Global Water Partnership. It was held within the framework of the EU – Central Asia Strategy for a New Partnership Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation and the WECOOP project. This took place in Almaty on 4th October 2014.

The major objectives of the Round Table Discussion were to:

- To raise awareness on the State Water Management Programme amongst the general public, public authorities, design institutes, scientists, NGOs and international institutions.
- Exchange views among experts and stakeholders on the contents of the Program;
- Support public participation in the decision-making;
- Developing practical recommendations for the finalisation of the Draft Program; and

- Provide the Government with comments and suggestions on the Programme.

The following issues were discussed:

- Targets and the structure of the Programme;
- Key Performance Indicators;
- Implementation arrangements;
- Programme management;
- Comments and recommendations.

Over 40 participants from Ministries of Environment and Water Resource, Industry and New Technologies, Agriculture, local officials, experts, representatives of river basin management organisations, design and scientific research institutes, NGOs, international organizations, journalists, and students contributed to the discussion.

A list of comments and recommendations was drafted after the completion of the discussions. The results of the discussion were summarised and disseminated to collect more opinions. Comments and recommendations were collected and integrated and submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

#### **i) Climate Coalition Seminar**

The Central Asian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Climate Coalition Regional Workshop on Climate Change in Central Asia was supported by WECOOP project. The event took place in Almaty on 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014. It gathered leading CSOs and representatives of climate networks from the Central Asian region, representing Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan together with international and regional experts from the World Bank, Climate Action Network, the European Delegation in Kazakhstan and GIZ. Over 25 participants discussed the strategy for the Central Asian CSOs' Climate Coalition, a non-governmental regional platform for tackling climate change related issues on a national and regional level.

The major objectives of the workshop were to:

- Strengthen cooperation among CA CSOs in the area of climate change at a local, national, regional and international level;
- Raise awareness on climate change negotiations and positions of CA countries;
- Discuss joint positions and possibilities for strengthening participation of Central Asian CSOs Climate Coalition members in the development and implementation environmental policies at national and regional levels;
- Discuss capacity building, youth leadership, and strategic partnerships issues.

During the workshop, participants shared their experience, best practice and expertise. Future coordination and cooperation within the Climate Coalition was also discussed. A common position on climate change and willingness to work in a constructive manner with all stakeholders at regional and national levels, in order to facilitate a more effective and sustainable transition to low-carbon, greener economies, prioritising social wellbeing and environmental safety for this and future generations was developed and agreed.

#### **j) Central Asian Youth Environmental Network Seminar**

The Central Asian Youth Environmental Network (CAYEN) was constituted by the International Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) in September 2006. Since then, CAYEN has been playing an active role in the development and implementation of ICSD programmes and projects.

The regular 7-th Regional Meeting of the Central Asian Youth Environmental Network (CAYEN) was held in Almaty 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. The meeting brought together young leaders from Central Asia to strengthen cooperation, exchange experience and discuss issues relevant to the involvement of youth in the discussion of environmental policy, green economy, climate change, and energy efficiency. The meeting was supported by the project and co-financed by UNEP.

The major objective of the meeting was to promote and support the CAYEN in strengthening its capacity, particularly in climate change, energy efficiency and green economy. Over 30 representatives from all five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) participated in the meeting.

The following topics were discussed during the Meeting:

**a) *Green Economy***

Objectives and instruments of green economy (national policies and programs, standards, including building codes, pollutions and green gas emission reduction, tax and tariff reforms, stimulating green-technologies and innovations); the outcome of Rio +20; current tendencies in the production and consumption; partnership programmes, waste management, market globalization and green economy.

**b) *Climate Change and Energy Efficiency***

Climate change: causes and consequences; energy and green technologies at a global scale; renewable energy technologies; adaptation to climate change (eco-village and eco-polis); climate change policy development (an overview of the Central Asian countries policies, UN led negotiations, the Kyoto Protocol 2013-2020); legal frameworks.

**c) *Public Participation***

Public participation in environmental debates, international environmental actions and campaigns, the framework of the Central Asian Network on Climate Change and Central Asian water network, EIA and SEA process (practical case "Kok Zhailau" campaign).

### **3.2.3 Regional Seminar, European Union Central Asia on Environmental Governance and Climate Change**

A regional seminar was held in Brussels on 10th and 11th April 2014, hosted by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and with the participation of DEVCO, DG Environment, DG Clima, DG Energy, representatives from the EU Delegation from Astana, the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea and delegates from the five Central Asian countries.

A comprehensive series of presentations and discussions from both the EU and Central Asian sides took place. A consideration of environmental governance in the context of a green economy approach, EIA and SEA was followed by discussions on the role of environmental information in policy formulation, including SEIS. Examples of EU and Central Asian frameworks were presented and perspectives on future development were considered. The delegates considered:

1. Further cooperation on environmental governance in the region. They recognised the importance of developing strong administrative capacity and strategic planning; to use environmental impact assessments as well as mechanisms to ensure public participation in the decision making process; and to gather and exchange reliable and comparable environmental information.
2. How to de-couple growth and production from use of natural resources? How to effectively mainstream environmental concerns into sectoral policies when drafting national policies

- and legislation? How to implement green economy principles in national country strategies and to support the various actors targeting more sustainable consumption and production?
3. The EU presented the latest developments in policy related to the green economy and also in the context of development and cooperation. The Central Asian countries presented their experience to date and highlighted some areas of priority in relation to implementation of aspects of environment legislation, illustrative examples of green technology development and related experience.
  4. A number of sessions highlighted the use of environmental assessment tools to support the decision-making and stressed the role that civil society can play in enhancing regional cooperation and environmental governance. In this context, the EU presented its EIA and SEA legislation. The Central Asian countries commented on the need for further work on secondary legislative instruments and the challenge of implementation and enforcement.
  5. The importance of exchanging environmental information and knowledge and to strengthen institutional frameworks and technical capacities of national and regional institutions across the region. In this context, the EEA presented the current status of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). The importance of using environmental conventions and multi-lateral agreements like the UNECE Water Convention was highlighted. The Central Asian countries described their national experience with regard to information and data systems.
  6. The overall EU Central Asia cooperation framework was presented by EEAS and DEVCO. Future priorities for EU cooperation with Central Asia for 2014-2020 were highlighted with particular reference to common challenges, synergies and lessons learnt and the experience of the on-going EURECA programme.

On Day 2 of the regional seminar focused on climate change and considered:

- That the speed of climate change is greater than earlier estimates. This means that the world needs to adapt more quickly to avoid reaching the +2 degree 'tipping point'. Beyond this point, the ability of the world to adapt to climate change is uncertain and may be unmanageable by humanity;
- In a globalised world, no one is immune to the impact of climate change. The science case is now compelling. Next to the science case, there is also a compelling economic case, for example, the main term in the latest IPCC report is risk. Risk may be more clearly conceived by the business sector itself. This is illustrated by the DAVOS Global Risk Analysis Forum where of the 10 top business risks, 5 are driven by climate change;
- Climate change is a risk multiplying issue that is well understood by business e.g. looming water crisis, food crisis, food insecurity risks. An analysis of climate change impact on the Central Asian region indicates there may be a few winners in certain areas but the overall, impact will be negative;
- An additional risk is severe income disparity. Climate change affects poor countries disproportionately;
- Many risks that have come to the fore have been identified by business – many have 'adapted' for example, through carbon pricing. There are not only risks but also economic opportunities in tackling climate change.
- In the EU it is believed that the only long term growth story is one that takes an ambitious approach to climate action and climate resilient development. We have seen emissions declining by 18% since 1990 and at the same time growth has increased by 45%. This 'decoupling' demonstrates that economic growth can be driven by ambitious climate change policies;
- There is also a security and political case for action on climate change. This is where the diplomatic community is active. There will inevitably be impacts on security and stability arising from climate change. For example, the World Bank's '4 degree study' envisages a scenario where humankind will no longer have the capacity to adapt to climate change and international cooperation may break down. It is therefore necessary to develop a greater



understanding of the risks and have the necessary global frameworks in place to permit cooperation e.g. UN Water Convention;

- There is also a political independence argument. By adopting energy policies that support the transition to carbon free growth, this reduces import dependency on fossil fuel;
- Many changes are already happening and climate is also coming to the fore in foreign policy under three pillars:

- a) Make climate change a central part of political engagement
- b) Use all foreign policy instruments to help implement climate change initiatives
- c) Try to put in place the mechanisms to address the security dimension of climate change.

Comments and presentations from the Central Asia side included:

- An update from Kazakhstan on national activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the set-up of a carbon trading platform;
- A presentation by Hydromet Service from Uzbekistan on environmental protection and sustainable development plans and activities including a specific focus on energy intensive industries;
- Comments from environmental NGO representatives on Central Asian actions and experiences in relation to climate change;
- A presentation from Tajikistan in its efforts to address climate change matters.

Closing remarks were by the EU Special Envoy to Central Asia, Mr. Janos Hermann, who acknowledged the work of the seminar participants and the ongoing and future plans for cooperation between the EU and Central in areas related to the environment and climate change.

The seminar programme included a site visit to the EU Emergency Response and Coordination Centre (ECHO - 00/MED3) where delegates were given in insight to the work of the Centre in areas related to resilience and disaster preparedness, particularly at a regional level that includes:

- a) Knowledge and information transfer;
- b) The establishment of a culture of safety and climate change adaptation;
- c) Transboundary risk management and response to regional disasters;
- d) Improved coordination and efficiency of international assistance.

### **3.3 Component 3: Communication/Mapping/Networking**

#### **3.3.1 Component 3: Specific Expected Results**

*Communication/mapping/networking is ensured and effective where appropriate. This includes:*

- *Enhanced visibility of the EU–CA cooperation on environment and water;*
- *Coordination and synergies between EURECA components;*
- *Coordination and synergies between EURECA and other EU platforms established under the "EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership".*
- *Coordination and synergies between EURECA and other EU-funded projects in CA (in particular projects funded under the Energy Natural Resources Thematic Programme (ENRTP) or Framework Programme (FP));*
- *Coordination and synergies between projects in CA and in ENP countries.*

#### **3.3.2 Component 3: Results Achieved**

During the Inception phase, the project team confirmed the existence of a significant information deficit with regard to the activities of the European Union in the environment, water and climate change sectors in Central Asia. The deficit seemed to be due to the multiplicity of activities that were underway, the manner in which the existing projects and activities had been presented and the absence of a clear central information point where relevant information could be accessed. Most of the information about EU Central Asia activities was found to be buried in a multiplicity of strategy documents, action programs, project descriptions and reports. It was therefore very difficult to get a clear overview of the exact scope of EU Central Asia cooperation in the environment, water and climate change sectors.

To eliminate the deficit and in accordance with the Work Plan coordinated with the EU Delegation and the TOR of the project the following activities were undertaken:

##### **a) Addressing the Information Deficit**

###### **Communication/Visibility**

- Communication Strategy and Visibility Plan, Terms of Reference for Project Website, Project Flyer and Project Brochure, design of visibility items, including banner, stand, and folder were developed.
- Visibility items, including presentations, banners, stands, and folders were developed and distributed during seminars, workshops, conference, and meetings;
- Information on the project Website was kept current and supports in two languages English and Russian the following:
  - I. Publishing information, including documents, pictures/photos, audio and video materials;
  - II. Furnishes seminars, workshops, conferences, including videoconferences with the information required.
  - III. Supports contact databases, development and dissemination of digests of the teleconference, mailing of invitations and notifications to the participants, support and provide moderation of meetings, development and dissemination of documents (minutes, protocols) of the respective events;
  - IV. Remote management of structured information databases;
  - V. Uploading data in the form of tables, charts, and graphs, as well as uploading data as GIS layers (GIS) of Google Maps;

- VI. Supplies Working Group with the required information providing support to project implementation/planning, development of work schedules and work plans, reports, evaluation of the project progress, as well as support files, lists of contacts and groups of contacts with comprehensive structures, joint work on documents;
- VII. Supports the follow up and feedback from and to various types of users, including public and professional discussions, and comments on materials published.

A visual presentation reflecting proposed Cloud Services for Project Management, Coordination, and Data Publication was prepared, discussed with colleagues from partner platforms and uploaded to the project website.

Comprehensive training video materials about using the WECOOP project portal were developed, including:

- General Overview of the Project Portal;
- Logon on the Project Portal and Logout;
- Personal Account;
- Address Book;
- Work with sharing documents: add new documents on the Portal, reviewing, editing and version control, notifications about changes in documents;
- Development of applications and orders: Sending orders and instructions;
- Supervision and control;
- Applications development;
- Security and internal communications;
- Emails and list for distribution: Using email, mailing and circulating;
- SMS notifications and distribution list for SMS;
- Videoconference set up and notification of participants, including preparation for videoconferences and notification of participants, participation in videoconference, polls and voting.

The project website was been maintained and updated in both English and Russian throughout the project period. Its purpose was to:

- Publish information, including documents, pictures/photos, audio and video materials developed within the framework of the project as well as links to the materials developed under partner platforms;
- Provide seminars, training, workshops, conferences, and meetings with required information;
- Host contact databases, and to send invitations and notifications to participants and partners, supporting and providing moderation of meetings, developing and disseminating documents (minutes, protocols) of the respective events;
- Remote management of structured information databases;
- Upload data in the form of tables, charts, video, and graphs, as well as uploading data at GIS layers (GIS) of Google Maps;
- Supply the Working Group with the required information providing support to project implementation and planning, development of work schedules and work plans, reports, and project progress evaluation, including Monitoring Report;
- Facilitate follow up and feedback from and to various types of users, including public and professional discussions, and comments on materials published.

The table below contains the results of the monitoring of the efficiency of the project website following the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) suggested.

The project website Key Performance Indicators (up to July 15)

No	KPI	Unit	Value
1	Number of visits	Number	5,811
2	Number of new visitors	%	62
	Number of sessions	Number	9,331
3	Number of returning visitors	%	38
4	Page views	Number	29,954
5	Average visit duration	Minutes	3.58
6	Pages per visit	Number	3.22

Visits distribution per region

No	Region	Number of visits	
		Units	%
1	Asia	4,379	46.93
2	Europe	4,210	45.12
3	Americas	410	4.39
4	Africa	150	1.61
5	Oceania	22	0.24
6	Not Set	160	1.61

Visits distribution per country

No	Country	Number of visits	
		Units	%
1	Kazakhstan	1,989	21.32
2	Russia	1,638	17.55
3	Kyrgyzstan	706	7.57
4	Uzbekistan	688	7.37
5	Germany	404	4.33
6	Ukraine	346	3.71
7	France	322	3.45
8	Belgium	285	3.05
9	USA	263	2.82
10	Tajikistan	249	2.67
11	UK	171	1.83
12	Italy	170	1.82
13	Turkmenistan	141	1.51

### Average number of pages visited per visit

No	Country	Number of pages
1	Uruguay	9.50
2	Kazakhstan	5.44
3	Denmark	4.20
4	Mauritius	4.00
5	Belgium	3.56
6	Moldova	3.51
7	Bulgaria	3.47
8	Netherlands	3.39
9	Russia	3.36
10	Italy	3.35
11	Austria	3.23
12	Kyrgyzstan	3.14
13	Switzerland	3.11
14	Croatia	3.07
15	Sudan	3.00
16	Turkmenistan	2.70

### Mapping

- Design Mapping dBase integrated with website;
- Design Project Fiche and Mapping Procedures;
- Initial Scan/Contact with relevant EURECA and other relevant projects and programmes;
- Project fiches prepared.

### Networking

- The project team participated in meetings, workshops, and conferences;
- dBase of contacts and circulation list were developed;
- Calendar of events was being maintained and updated;
- Project update emails were sent to the Reference Points identified under the Communication Strategy, including Team Leaders of the Rule of Law and Education Platforms, beneficiaries, potential partners and major stakeholders.

### 3.4 Resources and Budget Used

#### 3.4.1 Expert Inputs

The expert input table is provided in [Annex 1](#). This provides a summary of the working days utilised by experts and the timeframe for their utilisation.

#### 3.4.2 Incidental Expenditure

Category	Amount Disbursed <sup>1</sup> (EUR)
Flights/travel for expert missions within the project region	14,138.69
Average PD for Experts outside project base	43,074.00
Workshops/ seminars / visibility / training events and conferences	306,034.15
Translation / interpretation of manuals / reports	11,471.56
Office costs - telecommunications, stationery etc. (NOT RENT)	5,939.36
Car hire	416.41
Website maintenance (and development)	33,842.40
Provision for expenditure verification	11,091.79
Office rent	26,277.56
Office move	5,548.00
Bank charges	1,479.64
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>459,313.56</b>

### 3.5 Overall Schedule of Operations

The Overall Schedule of Operations is provided in [Annex 2](#). This provides a summary of project activities and the timeframe for their implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> Draft figures - to be updated in final version of this report on the basis of outstanding expenses which will be finalised by 30/07/14.

### **3.6 Implementation Arrangements: Project Steering Committee**

#### **3.6.1 Project Steering Committee**

The composition of the Steering Committee is governed by Annex II of the Financial Agreement between the EU and the Beneficiary Countries. This identifies the project Steering Committee Members as:

- Representatives of the Beneficiary Countries;
- EU representative(s) designated by the Commission;
- Service Contractor's key experts;
- EU Member States representatives in Central Asia;
- Relevant Donors (observers) active in the field of environment in Central Asia.

The Steering Group Meeting took place in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Senior officials, including Ministers of Environment of the Central Asian states, representatives of EU Delegation in Tajikistan, UNEP, UNECE, GIZ, WWF, and EU Sustainable Energy Programme for Central Asia participated in the Meeting.

The participants were informed on the project objectives, project components, budget, project progress and plans. The report was well received by the Steering Group members. The Work Programme proposed was endorsed, and the proposed Schedule of Implementation was coordinated.

#### **3.6.2 Coordination**

The project was acting as the Technical Secretariat for the **Working Group on Environmental Governance and Climate Change**. This provided an opportunity for the project to provide support to the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea in liaising with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Environment, Economics, and Water Resources in each Central Asia country to confirm the list of members of the Working Group.

Close coordination of activities was established with the other EU-funded Platform teams, including **Rule of Law and Education**. Managers and experts of the Platforms were invited to joint meetings to present information on their activities and issues of common interests. Synergy was ensured through regular exchange of information by email, personal meetings, and web information.

On the basis of discussions during videoconferences and follow-up email correspondence, the agreement was made that coordination with the IWRM WG would be limited to information exchange.

#### **3.6.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

An EU monitoring mission was carried out between 15th September and 22nd October, 2013. In its report, the mission noted that all contractual obligations were observed and that implementation of project activities was on target. The report also noted that budget information indicated efficient utilisation of resources.

Cooperation between the WECOOP project and the other projects in the EURECA programme was considered to be good, especially with regard to the two current regional water sector projects (WMBOCA). Mutually advantageous exchange of information and invitations to project events between WECOOP and other donors' projects in the environment and water sector was also noted.

The re-location of EC-IFAS to Uzbekistan, a country that has only 'observer' status in terms of WECOOP, was noted and the challenge that this presented with regard to full implementation of project institutional development and training activities acknowledged.  
Some

Project deficiencies were identified including:

- That it was difficult to measure project progress because of a lack of suitable indicators in the logical framework matrix;
- The absence of in-country coordinators slowed communication and added complexity to logistical matters;
- Greater stakeholder cooperation required for full achievement of project results.

It was suggested that, at country level, the project should encourage increased involvement of trainees from Uzbekistan to attend events in neighbouring CA countries, as no project activities are allowed within that country. It was also proposed to support the creation of an expert group under the ICSD for experience exchange, consider preparing a training manual on topics covered by WECOOP for skills sustainability and encourage partners to take over the WECOOP website after the end of the project.

### **3.7 Risks and Assumptions**

#### **3.7.1 Risks**

There risks identified at the beginning of the project stay unchanged throughout the project implementation. They included:

- Lack of political will;
- Inability to reach agreement on the legal and institutional basis for regional cooperation in relation to the environment and water;
- Platform is not supported by all relevant partners.

Risk mitigation measures ensured that these factors did not have an overly negative impact on the project throughout its implementation period.

#### **3.7.2 Assumptions**

The key assumptions that could have a significant impact on the project outcomes were also identified:

- That there is sufficient political will at the highest levels across all five participating countries to engage with each other in relation to transboundary water and environmental cooperation;
- That there opportunities for strengthened cooperation are identified and agreed, that implementation plans will be accompanied by the necessary resource commitments by all relevant parties;
- That lines of institutional principles and related barriers, which are mainly vertical, are flexible enough to allow for strengthened inter-institutional cooperation.
- Partner countries will be willing to participate in Platform activities, in particular high-level meetings and the working group;
- That personnel to be trained in the beneficiary institutions and communities are genuinely motivated to receive the relevant targeted training.

These assumptions were, for the most part, an accurate reflection of project experience throughout its implementation period.



### **3.8 Lessons Learnt**

#### **3.8.1 Organisation of the Platform**

According to the ToR, the Working Group on environmental governance and climate change was established under the EU – CA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation to:

- Facilitate the implementation of the Platform, taking concrete steps to strengthen policy dialogue and cooperation at regional level and to provide guidance on cooperation activities between EU and CA;
- Promote dialogue and enhance cooperation between the EU and the Central Asia Countries on environmental governance and climate change in the framework of the Platform;
- Guide, oversee and support the activities and the initiatives under the framework the Platform.

It was envisaged that the increased exchange of information and experience on environmental governance and climate change policies between the EU and the Central Asian Countries would have a 'positive effect for an increased mobilisation of investment flows by national authorities, international donors, including IFIs and private investors'. According to the Working Group ToR, 'it would be composed of official representatives nominated by each participating Country with recognised competence in one of the fields to which the WG relates, i.e. environmental governance and climate change'.

There have been several bottlenecks to achieving the original aims of the project in this area. Based on the experience gained by WECOOP, it is acknowledged that the Working Group was assigned to implement a number of complex functions that in practice are difficult to implement, primarily due to structural issues.

The Technical Secretariat was assigned to serve the Working Group under a contract with EU. But, the Technical Secretariat did not have permanent partners in each of the CA countries. There were no focal points to work with between meetings and there are no permanent WG members in Central Asia. This has led to a situation where respective Governments appoint members to participate in Working Group Meetings but there is no guarantee that the same person will be involved in the next meeting or for follow-on regional correspondence and interaction. In most cases, new members of the Working Group do not know about earlier activities, which leads to a loss in continuity. Taking into consideration the frequent turnover of employees in government bodies weaknesses in communication, newly appointed members of the Working Group have to learn about EU – CA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation and previous activities over a very short period and very often arrive at the meetings with limited knowledge of what has been done by their predecessors.

There is no Work Program or Action Plan for the Working Group members and no reporting obligations to facilitate follow-up after meetings. From a WECOOP perspective, during the reporting period:

- Working Group members were briefed on project developments and activities. An updated version of the project work plan, information materials and copies of all training presentations were circulated;
- A training programme for Working Group members was developed in accordance with the recommendations of the High Level Conference. Training events during the reporting period included Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

However, as the current WECOOP contract moves into its final phase and with the prospect of additional supporting being provided, it is important to consider what lessons can be learned from the first phase of the project. Some recommendations that are proposed at this stage include:

- A request that governments appoint at least one permanent coordinator (focal point) to support regional planning and engagement;
- Develop a concrete and realistic Work Program (Action Plan/Road Map) for the Working Group that spells out inputs and outputs (activities, timeframe, reporting obligations, resources, and communication tools);
- Meet more frequently to discuss progress of the Work Program implementation;
- Train Working Group members to use the communication technology and tools available at the project website.

Following the ToR, a comprehensive Training Programme to strengthen the institutional and development capacity of regional organisations such as IFAS, ICWC and ICSD was developed during the Inception Phase. The Programme was coordinated with the Executive Committee of IFAS and agreement was reached on an Action Plan to implement the training. However, the Programme was partially implemented due to the move of the EC IFAS from Almaty (Kazakhstan) to Tashkent (Uzbekistan).

Establishment of the EC IFAS office in Uzbekistan took more than a year and it is still not fully operational. The main impediment to strengthening the capacity of EC IFAS and ICWC in Uzbekistan is that the country has only 'observer' status with regard to WECOOP and this limits the extent to which the project can provide support.

The project focused on strengthening the capacity of ICSD through the provision of technical assistance and logistical support, enriching regional cooperation in the field of the key environmental policies, training delivery, EIA& and SEA, climate change and risk management and the green economy at regional and national levels.

### **3.8.2 Training Provision**

Training activities aimed to enrich regional cooperation in the field of the key environmental policies such as SEA and EIA, climate change and risk management, and green economy. Assistance to national institutions and experts in implementation of these mechanisms was rendered.

#### **a) EIA and SEA**

None of the CA countries have joined the Protocol on SEA or meaningfully implemented SEA. Enhanced experience, practices, regulations and guidelines concerning EIA and transboundary EIA as well as SEA harmonized with those applied in the EU are strongly needed in the CA region. The Seminars held by the EU Project seem to have contributed to raising awareness about closing this gap and the momentum gained should be retained.

There is an initial legal base and regulations established in all CA countries on EIA that can be extended to SEA issues, with specific laws on EIA adopted in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan drawing, in part, upon the EU selective experience. However, the latter three have not joined the Espoo Convention. Uzbekistan is the only country in the CA region that has not acceded to the Aarhus Convention.

In Central Asia, the general public does not have a tradition of participating in the process of decision making or planning. However, there are several NGOs that have undertaken valuable

work on environmental awareness raising and on promoting public participation. The EIA protocol should include also pro-active stakeholder identification so that all people potentially impacted by a development project can be invited to participate in the EIA process. The authorities should be educated to record all issues raised at public hearings and assess them with statements of in-house experts.

There is practically no experience in transboundary EIA in CA despite its potential contribution to managing transboundary water matters. There are some very promising regional organisations (IFAS, ICWC, and ISDC) which may have the potential to promote trans-boundary EIA and act as facilitators in the process.

None of the CA countries have joined the Protocol on SEA and seriously exercised SEA. The Seminars held by the EU Project seem to have contributed to raising awareness about closing this gap.

Enhanced experience, practices, regulations and guidelines concerning EIA and transboundary EIA as well as SEA, harmonised with those applied in the EU could be of significant benefit in Central Asia.

## **b) Climate Change and Risk Management**

Ecological threats such as climate change, deforestation, air and water pollution, natural disasters have impacted all groups in Central Asian. However, poorer sections of society are most vulnerable. Farmers and local communities face the consequences of climate change and their livelihoods depend on their ability to make appropriate response efforts. It is considered important to continue training to familiarise Central Asia stakeholders with modern technologies relevant to climate change and facilitate their implementation by setting up favourable institutional environment and enabling conditions.

It is recommended to:

- Advocate environmental concerns within other sectors and establish effective inter-institutional coordination mechanisms because the response to environmental issues depends to a large extent of actions in other sectors, e.g. meteorological services (warning systems), transport (air quality control in urban centres, access roads to health clinics and hospitals), disaster risk management, agriculture, energy;
- Carry out and/or update health vulnerability assessments, measures identifying the most vulnerable social groups according to their levels of exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity, translating them into policy and implementation actions;
- Develop awareness of the potential risks associated with climate change amongst public health sector staff and policy-makers, and provide capacity-needed as required based on a training needs assessment. As well as amongst the wider population through communication campaigns (e.g. using the mass media, schools, etc.);
- Rearrange and redesign existing programs and potential projects related to the climate change adaptation and mitigation according to the requirements of the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund and other funds, international organisations, and carbon standards. This would attract financing to projects and programs in the region under the UNFCCC financing mechanisms and carbon markets;
- Prepare and sign bilateral agreements on adaptation and mitigation programs.

## **c) Green Economy**

The Regional Green Economy Training Seminar brought together representatives of different governments and organisations across Central Asia to consider Green Economy principles, policies and specific challenges and opportunities for the region. The growing interest of Central Asia countries in the development of green economy strategies and policies could represent a

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unique opportunity to conduct specialised training at the national level, focusing on country specific priorities and economic, social and environmental characteristics.

The project supported seminar was successful in building the understanding of key stakeholders on issues related to green economy principles and policy instruments. The project presentations allowed the participants to gain a broad understanding of challenges and opportunities for a green economy transition in the region. In addition, the more technical aspects of green economy policy making were explored, including the use of indicators for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation; standardisation and sustainable certification processes; and available technology options to improve resource efficiency in a variety of sectors.

The main weakness of the training was its limited duration. With only two days, only a general introduction could be provided on green economy principles and tools. For the future, a duration of four to five days would provide time for group work, discussions and simulation exercises.

Considering the success of the event and the requests from participants to further enhance their skills in this field, a more in-depth and extended training, including at the national level could be provided in order to generate specialized knowledge at the regional level on the topics addressed.

As per the requests from the participants, advanced learning tools, such as on-line e-learning courses (example of the e-learning courses was presented by ESCAP trainers) could also be included in future programmes. In addition, it could be considered to organize specialised field study tours partnership for example with the UN ESCAP and UN ECE that will enhance the understanding and practical skills of Central Asia policy makers to develop appropriate green economy/green growth/ eco- and resource efficiency policies and tools in the transition to green growth/green economy.

## **Annex 1: Table of Expert Input**

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The Table of Expert input is shown in the following Table. Reports have been prepared by the short term technical experts engaged in the project. These are available in electronic copy, along with all training materials.