

Technical Report: REAP process and recommendations



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Prepared By	Bulat Yessekin, Senior Non-Key Expert
Reviewer 1	Anatoly Pichugin, Team Leader
Reviewer 2	Aïda Yassine, MWH Project Manager
Reviewer 3	Vadim Ni, Senior Non-Key Expert
Reviewer 4	Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader
Reviewer 5	Julie Pellegrin, Stantec Project Manager

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Central Asia
CAREC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
CA RC RES	Central Asian Regional Centre for Renewable Energy Sources
EC	European Commission
EC IFAS	Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
EU	European Union
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
ICSD	Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development
IFAS	International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
REAP	Regional Environmental Action Plan
REP4SD	Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIC	Scientific Information Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WECCOOP	Regional Coordination and Support for the EU-Central Asia enhanced Regional Cooperation on Environment, Climate Change and Water

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the auspices of ICSD and with support by UNEP, the Regional Environmental Action Plan (REAP) was developed and agreed by the Central Asia countries in 2003-2004. The Regional Environmental Action Plan is the key specific work programme for the ICSD activities. The necessity to update this document was widely recognized by the Central Asian states and the new REAP is currently being updated by the regional working group with the assistance of the Central Asia Nexus Dialogue project financed by the European Union.

This Technical Report is the main output of the review of the previous REAP process, identification of the areas for the REAP process strengthening and recommendation on its improvement, as specified in the Terms of Reference for WECOOP Senior Non-Key Expert. The report has been prepared based on (i) the information received during meetings with ICSD and IFAS, including their national bodies, and international partners including UNEP, CAREC, GIZ, UNECE, (ii) review and analysis of ICSD decisions, reports and other related material available produced by its national and international partners, (iii) information provided by the Central Asia Nexus Dialogue project.

It is envisaged that the identified capacity building activities will be supported jointly with the following international partners: GIZ, UNEP, CAREC, EC IFAS, OSCE, UNDP.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PREVIOUS REAP AND THE ONGOING PROCESS OF THE NEW REAP DEVELOPMENT

The process of development of the first Regional Environmental Action Plan was initiated in 1998. The following process of the REAP development led to the identification of 5 priority areas:

- air pollution;
- water pollution;
- land degradation;
- waste management;
- degradation of mountain ecosystems.

Each priority area has been addressed in the previous REAP as adopted by the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development on 12 April 2001. The document defines short-term measures for 2002-2007 and long-term measures for 2007-2012 as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. REAP measures on 5 priority areas

Short-term measures	Long-term measures
<i>1. Air pollution</i>	
Strengthening and harmonisation of legal frameworks on air protection in accordance with international standards	Identification of sources of persistent organic pollutants
Development and modernisation of the network for monitoring of transboundary air pollution and improvement of the system of pollution control	Assessment of transboundary movement of pollutants and economic losses on the EMEP Programme
Conducting joint scientific studies and research on air protection, creation of the system for effective information and automated databases	Introduction of non-traditional sources of energy
Creation of the regional network on the ozone layer	Introduction of modern technologies to clean and reduce air pollution
<i>2. Water pollution</i>	
Development of a mechanism for the implementation of the existing agreements of the CA countries on protection and rational use of transboundary watercourses	Development of methods for cleaning drainage waters with their further return to water objects and re-use
Rehabilitation of the national systems for monitoring of quality of surface waters of transboundary rivers	Modernisation of the irrigation networks at national level
Development and application of unified methodological guidance on water quality based on international standards	Development and promotion of water-saving and water-protecting technologies in all sectors of economy

Creation of conditions for the exchange of information on ecological state of transboundary watercourses	Improvement of the system of fees for use water, water pollution and harm to transboundary water objects
Instalment of water-metering devices and reconstruction and modernisation of the existing system of water distribution	Implementation of projects on sustainable and environmentally safe production at national level
Harmonisation of the regulation on unified water-protection zones (stripes) of transboundary watercourses and compliance with their regime	Rehabilitation of the existing and construction of new drainage networks, prevention of secondary salinization of lands
Conducting of environmental audit of certain sources of pollution of transboundary watercourses	
Defining and reaching agreement on standards of environmental flow by the CA countries	
Determination of the areas of transboundary underground waters and providing them the status of protected areas	
Rehabilitation and monitoring of tailings and dump sites impacting transboundary water objects	
<i>3. Land degradation</i>	
Strengthening and harmonisation of environmental legislation for the development of institutional frameworks to combat desertification	Development of alternative options in the economy, including ecotourism, to reduce the stress on land resources and fauna. Organisation of regional marketing of agricultural products for poverty reduction
Restoration of the network for monitoring, assessment of desertification and environmental impacts and introduction of distant methods of monitoring	Rehabilitation of eroded lands and implementation of measures to prevent land erosion
Support to the sustainable mechanism of coordination of the process to combat desertification	Rehabilitation of heavily degraded pastures, implementation of measures on rational use of pastures
	Conservation of agrobiodiversity by the establishment of protected areas and setting standards on anthropogenic pressure on ecosystems
	Afforestation of the dried-up bottom of the Aral sea
	Prevention of degradation of irrigated lands
	Re-cultivation of lands
	Reforestation in the mountains and floodplains
<i>4. Waste management</i>	
Ratification and accession to the Basel Convention by all CA countries	Promotion of wasteless and low-waste technologies

Development of a regional programme on waste management	Advancing the waste reuse in the mining and energy sectors
Creation of a regional network and support of centres of clean production (technologies)	Organisation of separation of municipal waste and its processing
Identification of areas of waste disposal with transboundary impacts	Technology development for the treatment and disposal of toxic waste
	Development of centralized polygons for waste disposal
	Rehabilitation of dump sites of radioactive and other hazardous waste
	Maintenance of a regional register of transfers of waste
<i>5. Degradation of mountain ecosystems</i>	
Establishment of new and strengthening of existing protected areas in the areas of formation of transboundary watercourses (Syrdarya, Amudarya, Zeravshan)	Restoration and strengthening of the network for monitoring of degradation mountain ecosystems of Pamir-Alay and Northern Tien-Shan
Development and promotion of alternative sources of energy in mountain's settlements	Restoration of degraded mountain ecosystems in the areas of intensive anthropogenic activities
Safety measures to protect economy and population from impacts of landslides, mudslides, etc.	Development of conditions for sustainable tourism, including ecotourism and agrotourism
	Determination of environmental and economic criteria for the development of mountainous areas of Central Asia
Strengthening of legal and economic instruments for protection and use of mountainous territories of Central Asia	

In addition to the above measures in 5 priority areas the previous REAP defines a number of measures on public access to environmental information and public participation in the decision-making processes and implementation of pilot project on environmental protection.

The call for update of the previous REAP was made by the ICSD in 2008 and it was substantiated by the necessity to take into account climate change issues, regional and global environmental problems (ICSD, Bishkek, November 24, 2008).

In 2013, a group of national experts led by the SIC ICSD conducted a study on the preparation of recommendations for strengthening the institutional and legal framework for regional cooperation on environmental protection within the framework of the ICSD mandate and development of specific recommendations on how to update the REAP. During the following years this intention was reiterated by the ICSD with the indication of the need in strengthening the institutional framework for the regional environmental co-operation. For instance, in 2017 the ICSD Secretariat noted: "In connection with the adoption of the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, in the light of the development of the green economy, it's necessary to revise the REAP by taking into account the

above global and regional processes. The updated document will allow us to revise our priorities and propose a new framework for the development of regional cooperation”.

The road map for updating the REAP was developed by the ICSD Senior Officials Working Group on 20-21 November 2017 at a meeting in Almaty. On 28 December 2017, Turkmenistan as the chairman of the ICSD circulated the road map among Central Asian governments as a guidance for the organisation of the REAP process at national level. It was agreed by the Central Asian countries that the new REAP should be based on the priorities identified at national level and the document should be valid for the period up to 2030. All Central Asian countries have been requested to elaborate national proposals in a unified format and on the basis of consultations to be conducted at national level.

The national processes for developing the new REAP (from now on called REP4SD) have started in April 2018. By the time of finalising this report the working groups in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan have met and these three countries have already submitted their reports to ICSD. In Uzbekistan, the process is a little slower due to significant structural and staff changes within the State Committee on Nature Protection and Environment. Kyrgyzstan for the time being took a position of observer to the process. The latest regional working group for REP4SD (i.e. technical ICSD meeting) took place in Almaty in December 2018.

At regional level, development of REP4SD is supported and coordinated by GIZ – particularly by its Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia. It provides both international and local consultants to keep the process going.

3. AREAS FOR THE REAP PROCESS STRENGTHENING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following areas for the REAP process strengthening have been identified by the Consultant:

- reconciling the REAP priorities and measures with national priorities defined by national strategies, programmes, plans and policies to ensure support of the REAP at high level and its ownership, political, technical and financial support by Central Asia countries;
- co-ordination at national level to ensure coherent national policy concerning participation of the Central Asian governments and sectoral ministries in ICSD and REAP;
- capacity building of the ICSD bodies and organisations (Secretariat, SIC ICSD, Regional Mountain Centre, Regional Renewable Energy Centre, Public Council and Youth Network) to enable them for the effective REAP implementation;
- improvement of access to finance for the implementation of the REAP activities;
- access to information and transparency of the REAP process.

The table 2 below provides a summary of recommendations made by the Consultant for the REAP process strengthening.

Table 2. Recommendations for the REAP process strengthening

Area of the REAP process strengthening	Recommendation
Reconciling the REAP priorities and measures with national priorities	Organisation of national consultations with the engagement of stakeholders on the preparation of national proposals for the new REAP. Review and identification of commitments on the implementation of SDGs, the Paris Agreement and other MEAs requiring regional co-operation.
Co-ordination at national level	Establishment of national co-ordination mechanisms on REAP activities with representatives of sectoral ministries, local governments, businesses, NGOs and media. Conducting regular consultations at national level on integration of the REAP activities into the national and local development programmes, plans and policies
Strengthening the ICSD bodies and organisations	Conducting trainings for the ICSD bodies and organisations on strategic planning, project development and implementation. Consideration of possibilities to delegate the role of the ICSD Secretariat to SIC ICSD or to

	a different regional or international organisation
Improvement of access to finance for the implementation of the REAP activities	Co-financing of the REAP activities by IFAS as a part of its financial support by Central Asian governments. Development of a road map on attracting investments for the REAP implementation, including through public-private partnership agreements, possible establishment of a trust fund for the REAP. Conducting trainings for the ICSD bodies and organisations on green and climate finance, relevant financial instruments, preparation of project proposals
Access to information and transparency of the REAP process	Selection and assignment of an organisation or a network for the information support of the REAP process. Development of a communication strategy for the support of the REAP process, including communication activities through regional, national and local informational networks, cooperation with NGOs and the media. Conducting trainings for key stakeholders of the ICSD on shared environmental information systems, development and maintenance of databases of environmental information

While the above recommendations developed by WECOOP expert team are fully relevant at the time of writing, it has to be noted that in November 2018 a draft concept note on REP4SD Production and Management was produced by Philipp Reichmuth (reichmuth@spot-on.org)¹ on request of GIZ – Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia. This document is based on careful analysis of recent developments in the region; it outlines suggestions for what should and what should not go into such a regional programme, and what this means for the eventual management and implementation of the programme.

In the opinion of WECOOP team of experts, all recent REP4SD-related activities, which were carried out by GIZ in the region, are very much in line with the recommendations of this report. The current process of environmental action programming in the region is on the right track.

¹ REP4SD Production and Management. Draft concept note by Philipp Reichmuth, November 2018