



Event Report


SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP

“Feasibility of the application of a transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure as a tool for “greening” economies and ensuring sustainable investments in Central Asian countries”



4 June 2018

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN



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1. Background

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an essential tool for greening economies and attainment of sustainable development goals. All five Central Asian countries are member States of ECE, but to date only two of them, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, are Parties to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention). As Parties to the Convention, they have specific mutual obligations to carry out a transboundary impact assessment procedure following the Espoo Convention requirements. However, countries face challenges related to the application of the transboundary EIA procedure at the national and sub-regional level due to absence of relevant legislative framework.

In this context, it is important to provide capacity-building support to countries to strengthen their legal framework related to EIA procedures. Capacity building activities are also relevant for non-Parties (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), as the Convention covers transboundary issues.

To help addressing shortcoming of the existing in the CA countries legislation, the UNECE has been supporting the process of developing Guidelines on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context for Central Asian countries that would serve as a tool for Central Asian countries for the practical implementation of transboundary EIA procedures in accordance with the Espoo Convention. Furthermore, in relation to recent developments in the region, notably the Belt and Road Initiative, for which all Central Asian countries are recipient, EIA becomes a highly relevant tool to promote green and sustainable infrastructure. In this regard, the use of guidelines will be very helpful for countries to consider environmental and health impacts of proposed investments.

Subregional workshop “Feasibility of the application of a transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure as a tool for “greening” economies and ensuring sustainable investments in Central Asian countries” was held on 4 June 2018 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It was organized by the UNECE in cooperation with the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The workshop gathered high and mid-level civil servants responsible for EIA issues from Central Asian countries, including high-level representatives from the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as representatives of international organizations, business and public associations.

2. Workshop objectives

The aim of the event was to increase the understanding of the transboundary EIA and SEA procedures by high and mid-level policymakers and experts from relevant environmental authorities in Central Asian countries and to increase their knowledge on benefits of transboundary



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EIA for attainment of SDGs, greening economies and ensuring environmentally friendly and sustainable investments.

The workshop served as a platform to (a) strengthen cooperation among the professional in the Central Asian sub-region in developing joint approaches to EIA, including in a transboundary context and (b) promoting practical examples of efficient implementation of the Espoo Convention in other parts of the UNECE region.

3. Summary of the Workshop

Mr. Aybek Adhamzhanov, the First Deputy Head, The State Committee of Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environment opened the event by welcoming the participants. In his welcoming note he thanked the partners from the UNECE and UNDP for their support in facilitating application of the EIA in the Central Asian sub-region. He highlighted the role of technical assistance and capacity-building in enhancing national legal frameworks of environmental assessment systems in line with the provisions of the Espoo Convention. H.E. Olivier Chave, the Swiss Ambassador to Uzbekistan, emphasized the rope of the Espoo Convention as a tool for enhancing international cooperation in assessing environmental impact, developing anticipatory policies and in preventing, mitigating and monitoring significant adverse impact in general and in the transboundary context, in particular. He stressed that Switzerland supported the update of the Guidelines on application of EIA in the CA sub-region and it would though UNECE extend its support to those countries of the sub-region that wished to align their legislation in line with the Convention. Ms. Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa, the UNECE Regional Adviser on Environment in her welcoming speech emphasized the uniqueness of the event which brought together the representative of Central Asian countries and created a dedicated platform for the exchange of experiences.

Following welcoming speeches, Mr. Jerzy Jendroska, international consultant on environmental law and professor on Environmental Law, Opole University, Poland gave an introduction to the international legal framework on environmental assessment and role of the Espoo Convention, presenting procedural steps, environmental assessment documentation and providing key practical features of EIA in EU Countries.

Ms. Elena Santer, UNECE Secretariat to the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA, gave an introduction to the Espoo Convention, highlighting the importance of developing Guidelines on EIA in a transboundary context for Central Asian countries that would serve as a tool for practical implementation of transboundary EIA procedures in accordance with the Espoo Convention.

Then, Ms. Saltanat Zhakenova, Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia introduced the opportunities for regional cooperation in the field of transboundary EIA and SEA procedures

in Central Asia and shared inputs of the revision UNECE Guidelines for the Central Asian countries for the practical implementation of transboundary EIA procedures in accordance with the Espoo Convention and facilitated the discussion on the next steps.

During the next session, Mr. Jerzy Jendroska, delivered a presentation on transposing international obligations on transboundary environmental assessment into national legislative frameworks based on OVOS/Expertize system. During his speech highlighted the key practical features in EU countries, presented the concept of OVOS/expertiza and shared the best practices of EIA procedures from Belarus, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

In the following session, Ms. Marina Khotuleva, international EIA expert facilitated a discussion on application of transboundary EIA in the UNECE region. She shared an experience of ecological assessment in Russia, providing an overview of legislative framework and recent developments of SEO procedures in Russia.

Then, Mr. Felix Zakharia, former Chair of the Espoo Convention Implementation Committee, Legal adviser of the Danube Commission illustrated the legal background for sustainable river development and delivered a presentation on application of EIA and SEA in a context of management of the shared water resources of the Danube River.

After that, Mr. Jerzy Jendroska shared challenges in implementing transboundary EIA procedure in Central Asian countries. He highlighted the variety of ways and approaches the countries of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe has been taken when planning and implementing their legislative reforms in EIA and SEA.

The session was concluded with interactive discussion, facilitated by Ms Elena Santer and Mr. Jerzy Jendroska on importance of strategic planning and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in dealing with transboundary issues, possible challenges of application of EIA and SEA in Central Asia and ways to overcome them.

5. Workshop conclusions

The workshop was carried out as it had been planned and, following the prepared agenda, it fulfilled its objectives. Thus, as a result of the workshop, the participants have:

- (a) learned about the experience of the countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus in reforming their national environmental assessment systems and the practical application of the transboundary EIA procedure in accordance with the Espoo Convention;



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- (b) discussed the role of the Espoo Convention as a tool for a tool “greening” economies and ensuring sustainable investments in Central Asian countries;
- (d) identified existing challenges related to the application to transboundary EIA and actions needed to address these challenges;
- (e) discuss the revised UNECE Guidelines as a tool for the Central Asian countries for the practical implementation of transboundary EIA procedures in accordance with the Espoo Convention and agreed on the next steps for its finalization, that would contain a review of national legislative frameworks on EIA vis-à-vis the Espoo Convention.



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SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP

4 June 2018

Hotel HYATT, Tashkent,
Uzbekistan

PROGRAMME

- 09:30 – 10:00** **Registration**
- 10:00 – 10:30** **Opening of the meeting, welcome comments**
Mr. Aybek Adhamzhanov, First Deputy Head, The State Committee of Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environment;
H.E. Olivier Chave, Swiss Ambassador to Uzbekistan;
Ms. Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa, Regional Adviser on Environment, UNECE;
Introduction of the participants
- 10:30 – 11:30** **Introduction to the international legal framework on environmental assessment**
Mr. Jerzy Jendroska, former member of the Espoo Convention Implementation Committee, Professor, Environmental Law, Opole University, Poland
- Introduction to the Espoo Convention and updated “Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment in a transboundary context for Central Asian Countries”**
Ms. Elena Santer, UNECE Secretariat to the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA
- Ms. Saltanat Zhakenova, Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia*
- Questions and answers session*
- 11:30 – 11:45** **Coffee break**
- 11:45 – 13:15** **Transposing international obligations on transboundary environmental assessment into national legislative frameworks based on OVOS/Expertize system**
Mr. Jerzy Jendroska



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11.45 – 13.15
(continuation)

Legislative reforms on EIA and SEA in Central Asia

Ms. Rakia Kalygulova, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

Mr. Rashid Karzhaspayev and Ms. Gauhar Baigozhina, Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Structured discussion facilitated by Ms. Elena Santer and Mr. Jerzy Jendroska

13:15 – 15:15

Lunch (and collecting the DSAs at the UNDP office)

15:15 – 16:00

Application of transboundary EIA in the UNECE region

Facilitated by Ms. Elena Santer

Russian Federation

Ms. Marina Khotuleva, international EIA expert

Questions and answers session

Application of EIA and SEA in a context of management of the shared water resources of the Danube River (tbc)

Mr. Felix Zakharia, former Chair of the Espoo Convention Implementation Committee, Legal adviser of the Danube Commission

Questions and answers session

16:00 - 16:30

Challenges in implementing transboundary EIA procedure in Central Asian countries

Mr. Jerzy Jendroska

16.30 – 17.00

Importance of strategic planning and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in dealing with transboundary issues and link between EIA and SEA

Ms Elena Santer, Mr. Jerzy Jendroska

17:00 – 17:30

Coffee break

17:30 – 19.00

Lessons learned from the EIA/SEA related legislative reforms in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus

Facilitated discussion on EIA and SEA application in Central Asia, including possible challenges and ways to overcome them

Closing of the day: summary of discussion outcomes and next steps



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SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP

4 June 2018

Hotel HYATT, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants: 30

Female participants: 15

	Name	Title
1.	Mr. Rashid Karzhaspayev	Chief expert, Department of green economy, Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan
2.	Ms. Gaukhar Baigozhina	Expert, Committee of Ecological Control Regulation and Control, Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan
3.	Ms. Madina Ibrasheva	Team leader, EIA and SEA project in Kazakhstan
4.	Ms. Nazira Abdylasova	Head, Division of State Ecological Expertise and Nature Management, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
5.	Ms. Rakia Kalygulova	Chief specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise and Nature Management, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
6.	Ms. Bubusaira Kasymova	Chief specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise, Branch in Chuy-Bishkek, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
7.	Mr. Maksat Bazarbaev	Acting Head, Division of State Ecological Expertise and Nature Management, Branch in Talas, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
8.	Mr. Meder Seitkasymov	Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) branch in Kyrgyzstan
9.	Mr. Dzhilil Khalilov	Head, Division of State Ecological Expertise, Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
10.	Mr. Qurbonazar Mirzoev	Chief specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise, Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
11.	Mr. Muhammadali Mirzoev	Chief specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise, Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan



12.	Ms. Salomat Nazarova	Chief specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise, Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
13.	Ms. Madina Rakhmatova	Project Specialist, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) branch in Tajikistan
14.	Mr. Feruz Himmatov	Director, Center of State Ecological Expertise (State Unitary Enterprise), State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
15.	Mr. Adham Kurbonov	Head, Division for the Coordination of Activity of Territorial Bodies, State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
16.	Mr. Aziz Muminov	Head, Division of Environmental Impact Standardization, State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
17.	Ms. Karina Bekmirzaeva	Head, Division of State Ecological Expertise, State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
18.	Mr. Zhahongir Gadaev	Chief specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise, State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
19.	Mr. Anvar Shabanov	Leading specialist, Division of State Ecological Expertise, State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
20.	Ms. Shakhnoza Umarova.	Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) branch in Uzbekistan
21.	Ms. Anastasiya Tsoy	Manager, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) branch in Uzbekistan
22.	Ms. Gaukhar Kudaybergenova	Programme Associate on Environment, UNDP Sustainable Development Cluster

LIST OF SPEAKERS

	Name	Title
23.	Mr. Aybek Adhamzhanov	State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan
24.	Mr. Olivier Chave	Swiss Ambassador to Uzbekistan
25.	Ms. Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa	Regional Adviser on Environment, Environment Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
26.	Ms. Elena Santer	Environmental Affairs Officer, Environment Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
27.	Ms. Saltanat Zhakenova	Environmental Management Program Specialist, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)
28.	Mr. Felix Zaharia	Legal adviser, Danube Commission
29.	Dr. Jerzy Jendroška	International consultant on environmental law
30.	Ms. Marina Khotuleva	International EIA consultant