

Unofficial translation from Russian

**ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW INTERIM REPORT**  
**on implementation of the Recommendations of the first Environmental Performance Review of**  
**Kazakhstan, conducted in 2000**

(by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan)

The Recommendations in the first review were covering the following principal areas:

1. Legal instruments and institutional arrangements for environmental protection
2. Regulatory and economic instruments
3. International cooperation
4. Air management
5. Municipal and industrial waste management in the eastern oblasts
6. Management of radioactively contaminated territories
7. Management of water resources and quality
8. Management of selected problems in the Aral and Caspian Sea regions
9. Management of mineral resources
10. Nature and forest management
11. Introduction of cleaner technologies in industry
12. Agriculture and desertification
13. Environmental concerns in energy
14. Health and the environment.

*Kazakhstan has taken the following action in these areas.*

The adoption of an environmental safety master plan for the period 2004-2015, ratified by presidential decree on 3 December 2003, is the starting point for Kazakhstan's new national environmental policy. For the first time, the master plan analyses and classifies Kazakhstan's environmental problems by magnitude and the level at which they should be addressed (global, national, local). Conceptually new areas of focus have been designated to ensure national environmental security, namely the greening of the economy, the greening of legislation and the greening of society. To address these issues, the master plan proposes that plans of action be developed within these areas at each stage of implementation.

Accordingly, Government Decision No. 131 of 3 February 2004 approves a plan of action for the implementation of the environmental safety master plan during the period 2004-2006.

The process of greening the economy began with a review of national, sectoral and regional socio-economic programmes considered from the standpoint of economic feasibility and security, and with the development of these programmes' environmental projects.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection has developed an environmental protection programme for the period 2005-2007 and a desertification control programme for the period 2005-2015, both of which have been ratified by Government decisions. These programmes set out a series of specific measures and the funding allocated for them.

The Ministry of Agriculture is carrying out a national drinking water programme and developing a water conservation programme.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has begun to develop a programme to eliminate long-standing sources of pollution that is to be approved in 2006.

In addition, the Ministry of Environmental Protection has embarked on the development and approval of medium-term regional environmental programmes in the oblasts and in the cities of Astana and Almaty. These programmes are currently financed from local budgets.

In order to provide an economic incentive to reduce environmental pollution, the Schedule of Payments for Polluting the Environment was approved by ministerial order in 2005 and will enter into force on 1 January 2006.

Rules for determining when measures qualify as environmental protection measures, which will serve as a basis for defining such measures and ensuring that they obtain financing from the budgets of the oblasts and the cities of Astana and Almaty, were drawn up and approved by Government decision in July 2005.

Considerable efforts are being made to work directly with resource users. Several memorandums of understanding and cooperation have been signed with resource users and local authorities. Experience has shown that these new tripartite agreements yield results that benefit the environment.

For example, the joint-stock company PetroKazakhstan Kumkol Resources has made good on a commitment to commission a heavy-duty gas turbine power plant to recycle well-head gas formerly burned off from flare stacks.

As part of the institutional reform of State environmental monitoring, an Environmental Protection Monitoring Committee has been established within the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

An environmental information centre has been set up at the Ministry of Environmental Protection to collect, sort, store and disseminate environmental information.

The clearance and licensing system is being streamlined, and the Government has taken a number of decisions to this end.

As part of its efforts to modernize the environmental monitoring system for the Caspian Sea region, the Ministry has established a Regional Centre for Monitoring the Caspian Sea based in Atyrau. The Centre conducts hydrometeorological surveys and monitors environmental pollution in the region.

The outfitting of all hydrometeorological stations and posts in Kazakhstan with the latest automatic instruments began in 2004.

A policy framework for the reform of environmental protection legislation has been developed. The framework calls for the drafting of an environmental code, a self-executing normative instrument that will codify all environmental standards and regulations, taking international standards into account.

The Industrial and Consumer Wastes Act has been drafted and adopted.

An Act has been adopted to supplement and amend certain legislative instruments relating to environmental auditing, the principal aim of which is to govern relations between State agencies, corporate bodies and individuals, environmental auditors and environmental audit bodies in the course of environmental audits in Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh Parliament has before it a bill on mandatory environmental insurance that establishes the legal, economic and organizational basis for mandatory civil liability insurance for individuals and corporate bodies engaged in environmentally hazardous forms of economic and other activity, should their operations cause harm to the environment.

A Forest Code and a Water Code are in force in Kazakhstan.

An Act has been adopted that spells out the functions and powers of the various levels of State administration and their respective budgetary relations, specifying and clarifying the respective jurisdictions of the central and local authorities, including in the area of environmental protection and resource management.

In the context of the measures to encourage the greening of society contemplated under the programme, a computerized environmental protection database is being developed to provide broad access to information about the environment. The Ministry of Environmental Protection maintains a website.

A journal entitled *Gidrometeorologia i ekologiya* (Hydrometeorology and ecology) is currently published each quarter, and the newspaper *Ekologichesky vestnik* (Environmental gazette) is published in Aqmola oblast.

Efforts are being made to resume publication of *Ekologichesky informatsionny byulleten* (Environmental information bulletin) and to organize the publication of a national newspaper entitled *Ekologiya Kazakhstana* (The environment of Kazakhstan),

To increase public awareness of environmental matters, work has begun in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Science on developing a system of continuing environmental education, as provided for in the draft State programme for the development of education in the period to 2015. Fourteen memorandums of understanding and cooperation have been signed with higher educational establishments across the country, setting out arrangements for the theoretical and practical training of students, the introduction of advanced technological innovations in industry and the employment of graduates specializing in environmental matters.

The Ministry is engaged in ongoing cooperation with non-governmental environmental organizations. Some 15 such organizations have signed declarations on joint cooperation. Their representatives attend meetings of the Ministry's central administrative board and sit on the Public Environmental Council reporting to the Ministry.

Considerable attention is paid to research in the area of environmental protection. An Environmental and Climate Research Institute has been established to conduct research on priority environmental science issues.

A three-volume environmental atlas of Kazakhstan is being compiled, studies are being made of military testing facilities and the Baikonur space centre, the interrelationship between environmental factors and public health is being explored, and radiation levels in the northern and eastern regions of the country are being investigated. Regulations and guidelines are redrafted and new ones are drawn up in accordance with the findings of this research. Regulations governing the declaration of environmental states of emergency have been drawn up and ratified by Government decision.

Ongoing efforts are being made to enforce international environmental protection conventions. For example, Kazakhstan has acceded to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. Pursuant to this Convention, new customs rules on declaring hazardous wastes have been introduced, thereby preventing the import of such wastes into Kazakhstan in the form of secondary raw materials and products.

In 2003 Kazakhstan signed an agreement on accession to the Swiss constituency of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the world's largest investor in environmental protection programmes. An Interdepartmental Working Group for the Intersectoral Coordination of GEF Projects has been set up, and an electronic GEF database is being established.

Significant progress has been made in relations with States in the Caspian region. November 2003 witnessed the signing of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, the culmination of work that began in 1995.

The Second Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was held in Almaty from 25 to 27 May 2005.

Kazakhstan's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was considered by the Interdepartmental Commission on Stabilizing Environmental Quality, which reports to the Government, and a decision was taken to discuss the matter with members of parliament.

The Ministry's Environmental and Climate Research Institute conducts an annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions in the territory of Kazakhstan and carries out research on this problem with funding from the national budget.

The destruction of the Earth's ozone layer is another global problem. To fulfil its commitments to protect the ozone layer, Kazakhstan has formulated and is implementing a plan of action and projects that include measures to reduce consumption of ozone-depleting substances, take them out of circulation, identify replacement technologies and provide support for enterprises that use ozone-depleting substances. Publicly funded research is also being conducted in this area.

On the issue of preservation of biodiversity, the Ministry is working with the Ministry of Agriculture to include various natural sites in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List, primarily the Korgalzhyn and Naurzum State nature reserves and the Kazakhstan Altai.

Desertification is yet another global problem. Accordingly, the Government has ratified a desertification control programme for the period 2005-2015, which provides for measures to stop and prevent the process of desertification in Kazakh territory.

Kazakhstan is currently promoting an initiative to secure the accession of the Central Asian States to the Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

As part of its efforts towards this goal, Kazakhstan's diplomatic offices in the Central Asian States have been instructed to explore the possibility of accession with the appropriate bodies in the respective host countries. The Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations has been charged with including this proposal in the agendas of international and regional conferences, seminars and workshops on water-related issues.

To make the Central Asian public more familiar with the main provisions of the Helsinki Convention, Kazakh delegates voiced support for the accession of Central Asian States to this instrument at the International Conference on Regional Cooperation in Transboundary River Basins, held in Dushanbe.

Given the importance of this issue, the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs is continuing to negotiate with other Central Asian countries and China regarding the possibility of their acceding to the Helsinki Convention.

A programme has been drawn up that takes a multiple approach to the problems of the former test site at Semipalatinsk. It covers the period 2006-2008 and is due to be ratified by the Government by the end of the year.

The Ministry is preparing to ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea.

While a draft text setting out special environmental requirements for enterprises engaged in economic activity in the Caspian reserve zone and areas adjacent to the Caspian Sea has been formulated, it has been decided that these requirements should be reworked to take account of the zoning of this area that is being conducted as part of the Ministry of Agriculture's budget programmes.

Specialized environmental and geological engineering field studies are being carried out under science budget programmes to evaluate the current environmental situation of the Caspian coastline in Atyrau and Mangistau oblasts.

Work is under way to establish environmental monitoring arrangements at military and space facilities and test sites.

These environmental protection measures mean that, at a time of significant national economic growth, the general level of discharges and emissions of hazardous substances has not only stabilized but even decreased slightly for the first time in recent years.