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**Working Group on Environmental Monitoring
and Assessment**

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**Practicalities of using the methodology of the Europe's Environment — An Assessment
of Assessments report at the national level**

**Executive summary: Report on Assessment of Assessments
for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan***

**Prepared by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
(CAREC)**

Summary

The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment welcomed, at its thirteenth session, the proposals from two Regional Environmental Centres to undertake pilot projects on assessment of assessments: in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia CAREC; and in the Republic of Moldova by the Regional Environmental Centre Moldova.

This report presents the executive summary of the assessment of assessments undertaken by CAREC in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The Working Group will be invited to discuss this executive summary as well as the entire report.

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Executive Summary

1. The present Assessment of Assessments (AoA) report for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on Air, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Wastes was prepared by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). It was commissioned under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessments (ECE WGEMA). The Government of Switzerland provided funding to CAREC for the preparation of this report.
2. This AoA report assesses the state of play in environmental data, statistics and reporting in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the above thematic areas. It further assesses the use of the ECE set of environmental indicators for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and their substantial relevance to the frameworks and sub-topics used for assessing the above mentioned thematic areas in member countries of the European Environmental Agency (EEA).
3. The report was prepared in consultations with the EEA and in accordance with the methodology “Europe’s Environment: Assessment of Assessments” (AoA)¹ along with web tools designed and developed by EEA for the AoA².
4. Both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan expressed strong interest in the AoA methodology and confirmed their willingness to undergo AoA, through which linkages and gaps between the challenges that exist and the means to evaluate and address those challenges can be demonstrated.

Post Astana progress in advancing environmental monitoring and assessment

5. Kazakhstan has continued and expanded nationally funded environmental reporting in the post-Astana period. Progress achieved in the country includes the field of environmental statistics: the annual publication “Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development” makes use of the ECE set of environmental indicators for EECCA countries.
6. Kyrgyzstan has produced a National State of Environment Report (NSoER) in use of the ECE Guidelines on indicator based environmental reporting³⁴ in 2012 and has passed a Governmental Resolution to provide the national funding for the regular publication of this report.
7. Furthermore, in both countries the new EU project “Forest and Biodiversity Governance including Environmental Monitoring” (FLERMONECA) was introduced, which entails the opportunity to benefit from the EEA advices on SEIS in the coming two years.

¹ The EE-AoA Guide at <http://aoa.ew.eea.europa.eu/>

² <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/europes-environment-aoa>

³ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/europe/monitoring/Publications/Indicators_Assessment/documents/Publication.Indicators___Reporting._ECE-CEP-140_Eng_final.pdf

SEIS related country situations

8. The present AoA reviews practices established in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for the collection and aggregation of environmental data as well as for the production of environmental indicators. Furthermore, the use of environmental indicators in reporting to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and in preparing NSoER with regard to four thematic areas is assessed.

1.1 Kazakhstan

9. The environmental monitoring has been further improved in Kazakhstan in the post-Astana period in the four thematic areas. The monitoring supplies therefore the essential data and information needed for preparation of NSoERs and for reporting to the MEAs.

10. Moreover, there is a growing capacity to ensure the consistency of environmental data through the development of an interagency environmental data exchange system between MoEP and the Agency of Statistics of Kazakhstan. The data is being maintained in electronic databases.

11. At the same time, there are needs to further improve data quality and compatibility, and the use of indicators. Also interagency collaboration for the exchange, storage and analysis of data should be strengthened.

12. To address these needs, Kazakhstan should explore collaborations within twining projects of EU institutions and national institutions of EU and EEA member states. Kazakhstan is committed to benefit from EU's FLERMONECA project to improve environmental data collection and storage, as well as the use of indicators and NSoER. FLERMONECA offers good opportunities for Kazakhstan to address its needs to further improve its environmental monitoring and assessment, and to establish an environmental monitoring system underpinned by SEIS.

13. Further active participation in the activities of ECE WGEMA and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (ECE JTFEI) offers opportunities to address the needs of the country to improve environmental statistics and reporting, and the use of indicators.

1.2 Kyrgyzstan

14. Kyrgyzstan continues to collect data through the following two principal processes: (i) through data reporting to the National Statistic Committee (NSC), and (ii) through regular monitoring by the Agency of Hydrometeorology (KyrgyzHydromet).

15. The data collected this way is however insufficient as e.g. the environmental monitoring network covers only limited area of the country. The data does not meet therefore the requirements of reporting to the MEAs.

16. Hence, reporting to the MEAs and the preparation of NSoER is often project driven with funding through ODA. In addition, due to the weak capacity for data storage, the data collected in projects is not sufficiently maintained by the country. For this reason, often MEAs' web-portals are the only sources in which environmental data and reports are available on Kyrgyzstan.

17. Kyrgyzstan has a great demand for building institutional setting and infrastructure that would help the country to establish an environmental information system underpinned by SEIS development. SEIS projects, among them EU's FLERMONECA project, should

be used for this purpose. The country should also benefit from its active participation to the ECE WGEMA and JTFEI activities.

Use of ECE environmental indicators

18. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan declare the use of the ECE set of indicators in their NSoERs. Kazakhstan also informs about using the indicators in the regular national environmental statistic publications. The present AoA shows however that the application of the ECE environmental indicators is limited and in both countries there is room for considerable improvement in the production of indicators.

19. The availability and quality of data is one of the main challenges for the production of the indicators. Also, the capacities of state institutions need to be strengthened for this purpose. In addition, the present AoA shows that there is a difference in scoping environmental assessments in EEA countries and EECCA members such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, in spite of joint efforts and common interests within the Pan-European platform.

20. Moreover, in both countries there is room for improvement of their respective environmental assessments in observance of the Drivers-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) framework, especially on “drivers”- economy, infrastructure, households causing “pressure” on the environment and on “response” measures to manage up environmental improvements.

The way forward

21. Improving environmental data collection, storage, aggregation, national statistics, and the production of indicators for reporting purposes should be the way forward for both countries.

22. In taking this path forward both countries should use the sets of recommendations of this present AoA developed in consultations with national focal points, involved experts and other relevant stakeholders.

23. Both countries are further interested in the AoA methodology to review the respective countries’ reporting processes in various thematic areas at the national level and to compare these processes between countries.

24. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are committed to establish interagency working groups under the umbrella of SEIS to improve data and information exchange. They would welcome substantial support to these working groups by EEA, other EU institutions, ECE WGEMA and JTFEI.

1.1 Kazakhstan

25. Kazakhstan is committed to establish better and more regular processes for the production of a high quality NSoER. The country welcomes relevant support from institutions in the Pan-European region to share their experiences and best practices in development of NSoERs.

26. Furthermore, Kazakhstan is committed to further improve national environmental statistics, and would welcome methodological support from institutions of the Pan-European region in this regard.

27. The country is interested in establishing a centralised SEIS compatible environmental data and information facility - the National Fund of the Environmental Information (NFEI) under the Information and Analytical Centre of MoEP. The country seeks cooperation with relevant EU and Pan-European institutions, including through twinning projects, for this purpose.

1.2 Kyrgyzstan

28. Kyrgyzstan is committed to improve environmental monitoring and assessment. The lack of internal funds available for this purpose is a major obstacle for advancing in these regards. The country would welcome therefore the support as part of ODA for improving its environmental monitoring and assessment system, including establishment of data and information storage facilities.

29. The country established an interagency working group on SEIS under the coordination of SAEPF and a Special Interagency Working Group on Environmental Statistics under the National Statistic Committee to have in place the essential structures for the production of environmental statistics. Training and capacity building for national experts of the working group would be welcomed, especially in the field of data collection and assessment as well as in the incorporation of data in environmental policy making.
