



Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division, Secretariat of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context: Pilot implementation project in Central Asia

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division is supporting a project to demonstrate the implementation of the EIA Convention in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

- Budget:** Euro 94 000
- Implementing Partners:** UNECE, OSCE, State Agency of Environmental Protection in Kyrgyzstan
OSCE Centre in Almaty
- Other project partners:** Ministry of Environmental Protection, Republic of Kazakhstan
Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
- Duration of the Project:** 18 months
- Estimated starting date:** January 2007
- Geographic area:** Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan
- Project contacts:** Saba Nordström, Environmental Adviser
OSCE/OCEEA
- Wiek Schrage, Secretary to the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Bo Libert, Regional Adviser on the Environment, UNECE

Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context:

Pilot implementation project in Central Asia

Objective

The overall objective of this project is to improve dialogue and cooperation and involve stakeholders and the public in the development and assessment of major projects in Central Asia with a potential cross-border impact on the environment. The UNECE *Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context* (further EIA Convention¹) is used as the main instrument to achieve this.

The specific objective is to demonstrate the effective implementation of the EIA Convention in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two Parties to the Convention.

Background

The assessment of the environmental impact of facilities and activities at an early stage of planning, including their cross-border impact, is a well recognized procedure in modern environmental policy and an important prerequisite for good neighbourly relations between countries.

The EIA Convention stipulates that its Parties shall assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It also obligates States to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across borders. The EIA Convention entered into force on 10 September 1997, and currently has 40 Parties in the UNECE region. More information about the Convention can be found at <http://www.unece.org/env/eia/eia.htm>.

The public and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the public have a key role to play in the implementation of the EIA Convention. This involvement contributes to:

- (a) Improved relations between people and countries, and prevention of transboundary environmental conflicts;
- (b) Development of civil society and democracy in the two countries;
- (c) Promotion of the timely disclosure of relevant information to participants in the environmental decision- making process;
- (d) Making people understand and respect final decisions on projects;
- (e) Providing an insight into environmental protection and long-term environmental problems.

¹ The Convention is also called the Espoo Convention.

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are Parties to the EIA Convention but are, for various reasons, not yet fully applying its provisions. Tajikistan as well as Uzbekistan are preparing to ratify the Convention.

Implementing the EIA Convention would be important for improving environmental cooperation in the Central Asia region.

For example, in the water sector it is essential that new projects such as production facilities or water infrastructure with a possible impact on ecosystems be communicated to and discussed with neighbouring countries. In the case of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, they share the rivers SyrDarya, Chu and Talas. Activities upstream in Kyrgyzstan should be communicated at an early stage to Kazakhstan if the EIA Convention is to be adhered to and Kazakhstan should, according to the Convention, have the opportunity to present its point of view on any planned projects.

It is a positive sign that Kyrgyzstan has requested support from the UNECE for the implementation of the Convention, as this indicates its willingness to honour its obligations. The possibility of demonstrating application of EIA in a transboundary context would be of importance also for the other countries in Central Asia. Kazakhstan has further agreed to take part in the pilot project.

As a first step in the work on the EIA Convention in Central Asia, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) in Bishkek implemented a regional project with funding from the Swiss government. This project included a training seminar arranged by the Kyrgyz Ministry of Environment and Emergency Situations which was co-funded by the OSCE Bishkek Centre. The regional project established guidelines for Central Asia to implement the EIA Convention. These Guidelines, which were finalised in 2005, will be an important basis for this project. The project described in this document will also be an opportunity to test the Guidelines in practice.

Project scope and expected results

The immediate objective of this pilot project is to demonstrate the effective implementation of the EIA Convention in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The full procedure of EIA in a transboundary context will be applied to a specific planned project (production facility or similar) in Kyrgyzstan, with the involvement of Kazakhstan authorities and the public as per the provisions of the Convention. On the basis of the experience from the pilot, national implementation mechanisms will be developed and needed training implemented in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The expected results of the project are:

1. National implementation mechanisms for the EIA Convention, including national action plans to support the implementation of the EIA Convention in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
2. Updated Guidelines for implementation of the EIA Convention in Central Asia.
3. Capacity building: Trained experts and officials, NGOs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

4. Pilot assessment of a planned installation, which is included in the Appendix 1 of the Convention, according to the EIA Convention procedures.
5. Dissemination of the results of the project to the other countries of Central Asia as a basis to the future application of the provisions of the Convention in these countries.

The results will also be disseminated to other Parties to the Convention.

A web page with information on the project has been created under the auspices of the UNECE at www.unece.org/env/eia/central_asia.htm#KKpilot

Project phases

The project will be implemented in the following distinctive phases.

1. Kick-off seminar – took place in Bishkek in January 2006

A kick-off seminar for involved actors, experts and officials, NGOs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and international experts was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in January 2006. A report from the seminar can be viewed on the web site mentioned above.

2. A pilot EIA

The pilot EIA will be performed according to the provision of the Convention. (see flow-chart of Annex 1). If needed the project will support consultancy costs, logistics, meetings etc linked to the pilot assessment.

The specific output of this project phase will be:

- An approved EIA in Russian and key parts available in English prepared by the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan
- Other documentation such as Kazakh viewpoints and conclusions from the public hearings in Kyrgyzstan as well as Kazakhstan. These documents will be available in Russian with key parts or summaries available in English prepared by the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan

3. Assessment of project results

The pilot EIA will be assessed in an expert meeting with participation of Kazakh, Kyrgyz governments, national legal experts, international experts and ENVSEC National Focal Points from both countries. As an outcome of the meeting changes of the recently developed Guidelines on Environment Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries will be drafted and proposed by CAREC.

The specific output of this project phase will be:

- A description of the EIA procedure as experienced in the pilot assessment in Russian and English prepared by the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan.
- An assessment of the needs in terms of the legal framework and capacity building in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan respectively, prepared by relevant national authorities and NGOs, if possible in collaboration. The documents should include the proposed programme for project phase 4. This specific

output is under the responsibility of the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan and under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment in Kazakhstan.

- An expert review and assessment EIA procedure in the pilot assessment by the group of international experts. Responsible: The Secretariat of the EIA Convention. Responsible for the translation to Russian: The State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan
- Revised Guidelines for Central Asia prepared by CAREC.
- The organisation of an expert group meeting. Responsible: The State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan.

All above documents will be prepared before the expert meeting and be revised after the meeting on the basis of conclusions from the same meeting. All documents will be made available in Russian as well as English.

4. Development of national procedures and capacity building

National working groups in Kazakhstan as well as Kyrgyzstan will develop national procedures and drafts of legal texts providing details for the national implementation of the EIA Convention. Capacity building activities will be organised in parallel to this, in each country. International consultants will support the work of the national working groups.

The specific output of this project phase will be:

- Reports from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the implementation on the development of national procedures and capacity building activities. In Kyrgyzstan the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry will be responsible and in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Environment. The documentation will be in Russian with key parts translated to English.

5. Regional conference to disseminate the results of the project.

A regional conference for all five countries in Central Asia will be arranged to disseminate the results of the project, including a final report (see point 6) of the project and the pilot study.

The specific output of this project phase will be:

- Organisation of the Regional Conference with participation from at least 4 Central Asian states. The State Agency Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan will be responsible for this output.
- A Conference report including Conference resolution, programme and list of participants in both English and Russian, published. The State Agency Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan will be responsible for this output.

6. Publication of a final project report, including detailed budget expenditure.

The output of this project phase will be:

- A printed project report possible to upload to the Internet in Russian and English. The project report will include edited versions of the material of the project phases accounted for above. This output is the responsibility of the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan.

Project organization and implementation

The project is a joint ENVSEC project between UNECE/OSCE and will be managed by the Office of the Coordinator to OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and implemented to a large degree by the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry in Kyrgyzstan. In Kazakhstan, the OSCE Almaty Centre will be instrumental in supporting the project.

The Secretariat of the *UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context* will facilitate the project and will also have a monitoring function. The Secretariat will establish a group of international experts that will follow and give advice on the implementation of the project. This will be funded to the larger part by UNECE member countries separately from the 94 000 Euro core funding of the project.

The project will see collaboration between the environmental authorities in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan as well as the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC).

The implementation of the project will be managed as follows:

1. The OSCE/OCEEA and UNECE will have the overall responsibility for project implementation, with financial and reporting responsibility under the OSCE.
2. All activities and the budget, channelled for activities in Kyrgyzstan, will be managed by the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry according to an agreement between OSCE and the State Agency. An advisory group with representatives of the State Agency and Kyrgyz NGOs will be responsible for developing draft work plans for the different phases of the project.
3. All activities in Kazakhstan will be managed by the OSCE Centre in Almaty who will work in close collaboration with Kazakh authorities and NGOs.
4. An agreement will be established between OSCE and CAREC for the participation of CAREC in the project including the updating of the Guidelines for Central Asia.
5. The Secretariat of the EIA Convention will be responsible for establishing the group of international experts that will follow, give advice on and report on the project.

Regular and final reporting will be made available to the OSCE/OCEEA.

Budget

The project coordinator at the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry will, at the early stages of the project, submit a detailed budget and Workplan to the OSCE/OCEEA for each project phase as specified above.

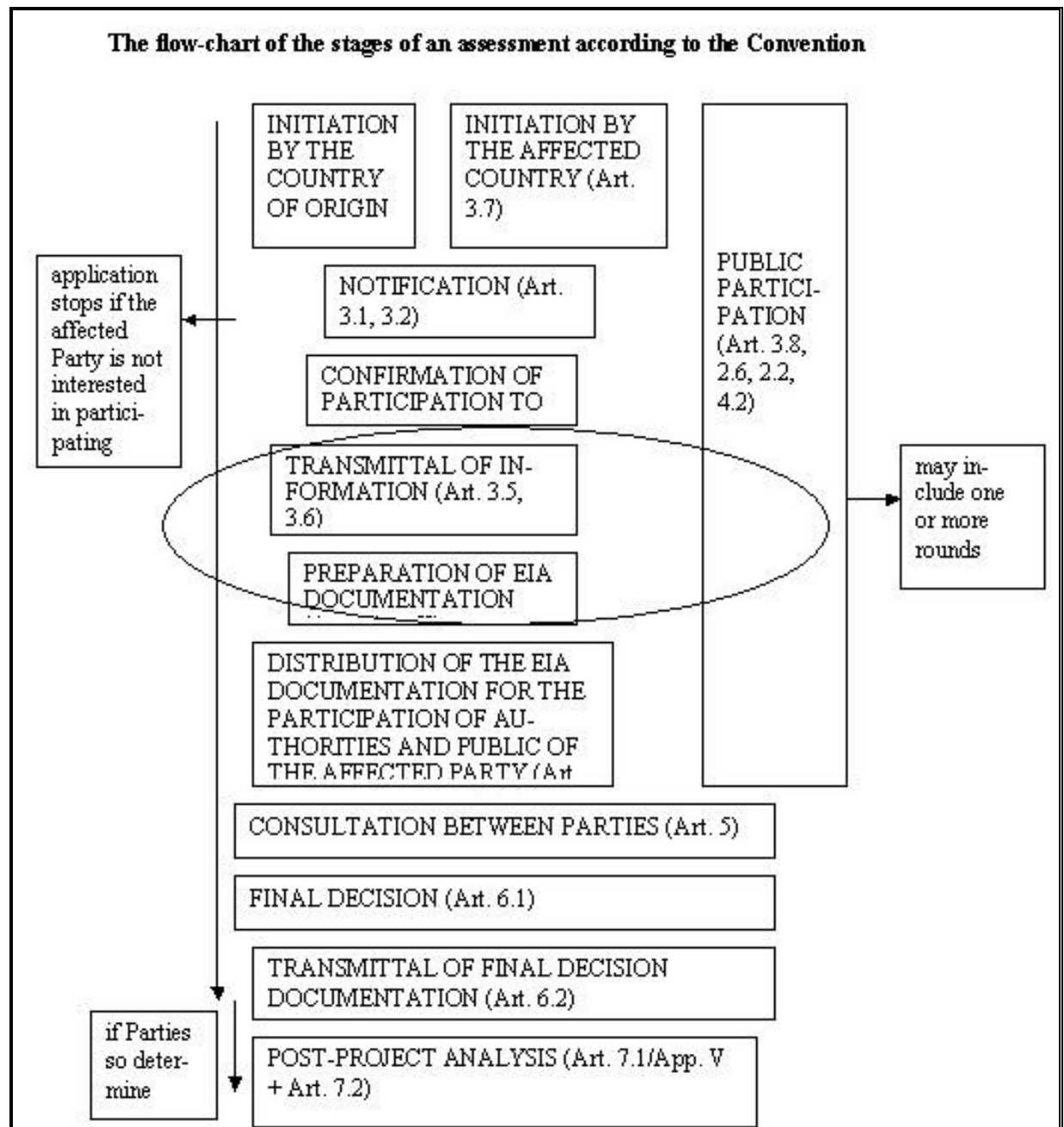
OSCE rules and regulations will apply to the project implementation and clarity will be sought from the OSCE/OCEEA before expenditures take place.

The available project budget to the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry is a maximum of 61 000 EURO, and the total budget is 94,000 EURO. For a breakdown of the budget, see Annex 2

The OSCE Centre in Almaty will support the management of the project, including finances in Kazakhstan.

OSCE and UNECE will supply its input in terms of staff time as in-kind contribution to the project.

Annex 1



Annex 2

Estimated project budget (in EURO)

	Component	State Agency in Kyrgyzstan	OSCE Almaty Centre	CAREC	OSCE Vienna	Total
	Project management	5000		3000		8000
		0				
	Phase 2 Pilot EIA					
	logistics meetings	2,000	2000			4000
	consultants					
	travel					
	Phase 3 Project assessment					
	logistics meeting	12000				12000
	consultants	2000				2000
	travel				6000	6000
	Phase 4 National procedures					
	logistics meetings	3,000	3000			6000
	consultants	5,000	5000			10000
	travel	1,000	1000			2000
	Equipment	7000				7000
	Phase 5 Regional conference					
	logistics	20,000				20000
	consultants				5000	5000
	travel				8000	8000
	Phase 6 Final report					
	Translation and publication	4000				4000
	Total	61,000	11,000	3000	19,000	