

Focus on the Aarhus Convention in Central Asia: July 2008

A regular newsletter published by the project team "Strengthening Public Participation and Civil Society Support to Implementation of Aarhus Convention" a project funded by the European Union's Tacis programme for Central Asia

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Key Results: Update

The implementation of the project's activities throughout Central Asia has continued to accelerate from the progress that was reported in April's newsletter. We asked the project's team leader (Mr Simon Pow) to provide a short up-date.



I think that it's true to say that we have made solid progress in all countries, and we're currently extremely busy with project activities in full swing for most countries. I'm so busy that I don't even have time to describe in detail what the project has been up to over the last three months, so I hope that you'll understand if I just provide a series of "bullet points" for each country!

Kazakhstan

The implementation of the Kazakh workplan is proceeding. Notable milestones during the last three months have included:

- First training session of the National Team in Almaty on 20-21 May;



Ms Olga Razbash making her presentation at the National Team Meeting.

- On-going search for an expert(s) to revise the user guides produced by a previous Tacis project in CEE to Kazakh conditions;
- A pre-Riga meeting between civil society and Ministry of Environmental Protection at Astana on 15 May;
- Participation of three representatives from Kazakh civil society at the Third Meeting of the Parties in Riga in June;



Representatives from Central Asia Participating in a small "Break-Out" Meeting at the Ecoforum Pre-meeting at Riga

- Selection of two pilot projects (PRTR and Awareness Raising in the Caspian Region) by NCC members on 15 May 2008;
- Inter-state workshop on access to justice, held in Astana on 16 and 17 June, in co-operation with the OSCE, UNEP, and the Kazakh Supreme Court;



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Participants at the Astana Inter-State Workshop Studying the Materials and Presentations.

- Interim analysis of the Kazakh legal framework with respect to compliance with Aarhus Provisions.

Kyrgyzstan

The formation of a new NCC for Kyrgyzstan at the end of June has led to a dramatic progress towards the end of this reporting period. A new workplan has been developed and agreed with all key stakeholders and, at the time of writing, experts are being identified to implement the various project activities, and approvals are consequently being sought from the EC Project Manager.

Tajikistan

Project progress in Tajikistan is the most advanced of any of the Central Asian countries to-date. Key milestones have included:

- Kazakh “access to justice” manual revised to Tajik conditions;
- National “access to justice” workshop in Dushanbe on 28 May 2008;
- Local access to justice workshops in June and July held at the Institute for Justice;



Participants at the national access to justice workshop held in Dushanbe on 28 May

- One representative from civil society (Public Council) funded to attend the Riga conference;
- Implementation of selected pilot projects has started in July following Contract Addendum from EC;
- Training needs analysis for National Team completed;
- On-going revision of the “user guides” developed by a previous Tacis project in CEE to Tajik conditions;

- National Tajik Team training over a two day period from 26 to 27 May on the “access to justice” pillar;



Ms Olga Razbash lecturing to National Team members

- Legal analysis finalised and recommendations developed for strengthening the legislative framework; and
- Translation of the PRTR protocol into Tajik.

Activities in Tajikistan, particularly towards the end of this quarter, are now concentrating on the implementation of the pilot projects and the implementation of the seminars for strengthening the access to justice pillar.

Turkmenistan

The registration of the project in May unlocked the “flood gates” as far as the project’s implementation has been concerned. Key activities of note have included:

- Adaptation of the Kazakh “access to justice” manual to Turkmen conditions;



Ms Kim Swanzey (Project Manager) discussing the Turkmen workplan with the Turkmen NCC chaired by Mr Bekmurad Eyeberdiyev (National Co-ordinator – Aarhus Convention, Turkmenistan)

- Analysis of Turkmen legislation and recommendations for strengthening the framework with respect to compliance with the Aarhus Convention;
- Solicitation of potential pilot projects through an advertisement on the Ministry’s web-site;
- Establishment of the Turkmen National Team;
- Financing attendance at Riga from representatives from civil society and Ministry of Nature Protection;





Ms Victoria Akopova (Aarhus Convention Focal Point) and Mr Nazar Korpeyev (NGO Tebigy Kuwwat) at MOP 3, Riga

- Review of status of PRTR implementation
- Preparation and distribution of the project's first newsletter for Turkmenistan



In addition to the above, preparations are underway for the national "access to justice" workshop in August to which a number of high-level stakeholders (including the international community) have been invited as well as speakers from elsewhere in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan

The absence of a statement of endorsement has badly hampered the implementation of project activities in Uzbekistan. To all intents and purposes the project is still in the planning phase. However, that said, progress has undoubtedly been made with the agreement between all key stakeholders on a revised scope of works, the composition of a working group, and the financial resources to be allocated to the country.

In addition, the project also provided support for the presentation of a paper by an environmental NGO at MOP 3 in Riga. Furthermore, the regional pilot project on the Fergana Valley was proposed by Uzbekistan together with the Aarhus Centres in Osh (Kyrgyzstan) and Hodzhent (Tajikistan).

Project News

Momentum is starting to build in the implementation of project activities, although we've still to really get things moving in Uzbekistan.

Key events planned in the nearest future include:

- "Roll out" of the access to justice manuals/capacity building programme at a local level in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan;
- Adaptation of the user guides to country-specific conditions in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan;
- Training of the National Teams in all pillars of the Aarhus Convention;
- Training of stakeholders, by members of the National Teams in each country, in the provisions of the Aarhus Convention;
- Implementation of the pilot projects in each country;
- Strengthening of the respective legislative frameworks in each country;
- Implementation of PRTR activities in each country; and
- Implementation of the country-specific scope of works for Uzbekistan

We look forward to reporting on the successful achievement of the above milestones in our next newsletter!



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