

UN Environment response to the Survey

EC's work effectiveness can be synthesized in the following ways, from the perspective of UN Environment in Central Asia:

- Overall, EU various projects' temporary impact have been very good. The many capacity building events, for instance, that were conducted during the WECOOP generated among participants further interest, commitment and also equipped them with a package of knowledge and some methodologies in water management. Also the transition to green economy project jointly implemented with UNDP and UNECE have been commended for their practical and real results on the ground in the pilot areas.
- However, the long-term effect, or rather impact is not so palpable. Also, anecdotes go around as to the quality versus quantity of the many specialized trainings that took place.
- The linkage with policy and enforcement has not really taken root in the CA countries practices. This is mainly due to the rotation in government agencies, budget limits and lax monitoring.
- An observation is that EC does not really pay much attention to CA wholistic sustainable environment management. The focus is on water, which is highly important. However, in a bit single-sided way focusing on Aral, where many other big donors are contributing to as well, has had some fragmentation effect. Fragmentation in the sense that other ecosystem degradations and a systemic approach (land, desertification, biodiversity, forest/mountains, waste, toxic waste, energy generation, migratory species, environmental data, green economy, in particular lately need to green infrastructure) do not get tackled by the governments in a wholistic manner as they focus on areas where big donor funds are.

In a nutshell, EU presence and work has been welcome and appreciated by CA countries and other international actors. There is nonetheless improvement to be made to make EU strategy and projects more wholistic in line with the countries SDGs commitments. Special attention is also to be paid to the longer-term impact and inter-linkages of many aspects of CA fragile ecology as a whole.

As for the next EU Strategy for Central Asia, you probably have already thought of aligning the strategy with countries SDG Action Plans. On the environmental front the following may be some of the areas to consider:

- Green Economy as umbrella
- Green finance as means (in-country through green fiscal policies and externally with GCF, BRI etc)
- Consider contributing to a Regional Environment platform that support global priorities on the national and regional levels;
- Promotion and Delivery of Environmentally Sound Waste Management Technologies
- Support activities on environmental information management systems (EIMS), SEIS and environmental data on biodiversity and in relation to environmental statistics for the SDGs, including water sector