

SWITCH-Asia

Multi-stakeholder Consultation in Uzbekistan

MEETING REPORT

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The Multi-stakeholder Consultation in Uzbekistan has been organised by the SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility with the support of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

ACRONYMS

CAREC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
DG DEVCO	European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
EC	European Commission
EE	Energy Efficiency
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
MSC	Multi-stakeholders Consultation
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NFP	National Focal Point
RE	Renewable Energy
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SCPF	SWITCH-Asia Sustainable Consumption and Production Facility/ SCP Facility
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement

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BACKGROUND

This report summarises the presentations and discussions that took place at the SWITCH-Asia first Multi-stakeholder Consultation (MSC) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Uzbekistan, organised by the SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility in collaboration with the European Union Delegation to Uzbekistan.

The event brought together about 50 stakeholders, including policy makers, universities, practitioners, grantees and civil society to discuss challenges and identify national priorities on SCP, with the aim to ultimately strengthening Uzbekistan's work towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and shifting towards a green and circular economy.

With nearly EUR 280 million in funding since its launch in 2007, SWITCH-Asia is the largest SCP programme supported by the European Union. The second phase of SWITCH-Asia was launched in 2018, and in July 2019, the programme was extended to five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Seven grant projects were awarded to the Central Asian region in 2020 focusing on tourism, agri-food and textile sectors.

The SWITCH-Asia programme in Central Asia is framed around two strategic components that provide support to its implementation:

- The **Grants Scheme** of the programme funds pilot projects helping Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to adopt cleaner technologies and more sustainable industrial practices as well as helping consumers to act more responsibly in their daily choices. The last call for proposal was launched in 2019. 23 new projects were awarded, seven of which in Central Asia;
- The GIZ-led consortium implementing the **Sustainable Consumption and Production Facility (SCP Facility)** is based in Bangkok and Almaty. The SCP Facility aims at providing technical assistance to eligible countries, through technical assistance supporting them in the elaboration and implementation of their national policies related to SCP and green economy. Through the analysis of the results of the pilot projects, the Facility aims also at providing guidance in improving the access to finance and to private-public investments in order to replicate and/or scale-up SCP approaches in the region. Finally, it aims at creating an internal dialogue between the components of the programme ensuring coherence and synergies of activities.

The objectives of this Multi-stakeholders consultation were to:

- Bring the concerned stakeholders together including ministries, business, academia, universities and other key actors at national and sub-national levels and create a productive exchange on needs and priorities;
- Discuss national SCP needs, priorities, challenges and opportunities for action;
- Identify support needed from the SCP Facility to address selected priorities;
- Define concrete next steps on how to implement the demand that will result from this consultation in further supporting SCP delivery;
- Establish a consultation platform between key stakeholders including the ministries, business, civil society actors, National SCP Focal point, and the EU Delegation to further mainstream and address SCP related issues in the country.



OPENING SESSION

The meeting was opened by Ambassador **Eduards Stiprais**, Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Uzbekistan. He explained the significant benefits of shifting to more sustainable consumption and production models and green and circular economy while introducing the **European Green Deal** as a top priority for the EU in the next years. The European Green Deal puts a strong emphasis on supporting the transition to clean energy in line with a more ambitious climate policy and also sets the principles for the EU commitment with its partner countries in this regard. This will involve rethinking business models and supply chains across industries and how value will be redefined over the coming years.

The **EU Strategy for Central Asia** adopted in June 2019 also highlights the importance to support Central Asia in engaging in higher environmental standards encouraging the region to move away from linear production models to a circular economy, in which the value of products is retained as long as possible and where waste and emissions of carbon are minimised.

Khurshed Rakhmatullaev, Head of Division, Ministry of Economy and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, pointed out the importance of EU Delegation's assistance in the transition to a green and circular economy through the implementation of SCP tools and practices such as eco-labelling, green procurement, waste minimisation (3R approach implementation) and energy efficiency.

Finally, participants were encouraged to follow on next calls for grant projects by the EU and to submit projects to SWITCH-Asia grants scheme in support to further promote SCP in Uzbekistan through relevant pilot projects in the country.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE
CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



10 RESPONSIBLE



INTRODUCTION SESSION

SWITCH-Asia programme and SCP approach as an enabler to green economy and sustainable development

Zulfira Zikrina, Key Expert for Central Asia, on behalf of Arab Hoballah, Team Leader, EU SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility opened the first session.

This session emphasised the importance of switching to SCP and the uniqueness of the SWITCH-Asia programme in addressing current environmental challenges and raising people's awareness of the benefits of switching to SCP practices. The main message was aimed at explaining the integrated approach and the relationship between the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) together with the coherence among the Goals to implement green economy in Uzbekistan. Such a tool as eco-innovation has to be used to promote application of sustainable business practices along value chains, to focus on sectors with the highest potential for decoupling. Moreover, since SCP is by essence cross-cutting, all relevant stakeholders should be associated throughout the process with the elaboration and the implementation of any SCP Action Plan. The main remark was also made on Uzbekistan SCP needs, the need for platform creation and the

collaboration between stakeholders. This greatly affects people's understanding of specific issues, as well as consumers' behaviour.

Outcomes of the SCP assessment, status, challenges and needs

Zulfira Zikrina, Key Expert for Central Asia, EU SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility

In this session, **Zulfira Zikrina** introduced the outcomes of the SCP assessment initially prepared in June 2019.

In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Economy and Industry, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Management, State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection, Ministry of Housing and Communal Services, Ministry of Construction, Republican Commission on energy efficiency and renewable energy and others are working on issues relevant to SCP. The Strategy on Transition to a Green Economy was approved in October 2019. A series of concepts and programmes related to SCP were adopted by Government such as the concept of environmental protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, the programme on

development of renewable energy, energy efficiency in economic and social sectors for 2017-2021, and the waste management programme. A country-wide eco-code is under its planning stage. Several standards related to SCP were approved by the Government, including: Eco-labelling, Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), green standards for production and services. An open online platform was created for information exchange for SMEs.

From a desk assessment, the following challenges were identified: lack of understanding of the SCP concept and mainstreaming it into policy, and lack of experience in its implementation; limited inter-ministerial coordination, as well as insufficient expertise for guiding and framing needs for change.

Priority sectors were also identified, including: agriculture, industry and construction, as well as supporting SMEs. It was suggested that the SCP Facility could provide technical assistance in the elaboration of a SCP Action Plan and also consider common regional Central Asia priorities such as green public procurement and eco-labelling.

The SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility can also help raise awareness on SCP in the region and in Uzbekistan through stronger communication efforts, including building the capacities of relevant stakeholders on effective project communications and writing relevant stories for the media.



KEY MESSAGES

1

Uzbekistan should improve legislation on SCP.

2

Clearly define national priorities for promoting SCP in general and sectors for needed technical assistance in particular.

3

Mainstreaming SCP in other national policies in support to their delivery, aiming at impactful transformation with the support of the EU SWITCH-Asia programme in the next few years.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES RELATED TO SCP IN UZBEKISTAN



The first speaker, **Odilkhon Nimatullaev**, SWITCH-Asia National Focal Point and Head of Department for Development of Green Economy of the Ministry of Economy and Industry, delivered a presentation on the green economy policy in Uzbekistan, highlighting its main goals connected to SCP. Priority directions include:

- Improving the energy efficiency of basic sectors of the economy;
- Developing renewable energy;
- Improving the efficiency of natural resource use and preserving natural ecosystems;
- Developing financial and non-financial mechanisms to support the "green" economy.

The main indicators by 2030 will be the reduction of specific greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP by 10%, twofold increase in energy efficiency, doubling the carbon intensity of GDP; increasing the share of renewable energy to more than 25%. Potential priorities areas were also identified.



The second speaker, **Nilufar Ubaydullaeva**, Chief Specialist, State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environment, informed that Uzbekistan is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (approved by Cabinet of Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan, October 20, 2019) at the national level. National SDG indicators were grouped into six thematic areas – environment, education, health care, social, economic and effective management.

The emphasis was on the implementation of Goal 12, including five indicators -12.4.1 (number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste and other chemicals), 12.4.2.1 (production of toxic waste 1-3 hazard classes per capita), 12.4.2.2 (percentage of neutralized production waste 1-3 hazard classes in the total volume of generated production waste 1-3 hazard classes), 12.5.1 (national recycling rate, tons of materials recycled), 12.6.1 (number of companies publishing sustainability report). It was noted that Goskomekologiya (the Environmental State Committee) is the authorised and responsible body in the field of voluntary eco-labelling of products.



Igor Ogai, from OOO "Solar city Solutions", the first domestic company which produces solar panels for water heaters in Uzbekistan also shared his experience from the private sector's perspective. The company was founded in 2015 and is equipped with modern facilities. More than 3 million collectors were put into operation in 2015. The strong point is energy savings, reducing greenhouse gases emissions, operating under -35 C°.



KEY MESSAGES

1

The need to further work on SCP, either through the preparation of an action plan on SCP and/or by actively mainstreaming SCP in other relevant policies and action plans.

2

The importance of monitoring the implementation of the SDGs relevant to SCP with strong cooperation with all stakeholders.

3

Increasing the role of MSMEs for “greening” the economy.



FRAMING SCP NEEDS AND ACTIONS OF THE TOP THREE SELECTED PRIORITIES

REAP – Resource Efficiency in Agri-food Production and Processing

Ludmila Kiktenko, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), introduced the REAP project and how it will promote SCP practices in the agri-food production and processing industries along the entire supply chain. The project aims to develop the business case for resource efficiency measures by MSMEs, while promoting eco-efficiency based on international standards and supporting companies in presenting bankable projects to financial institutions. It will also provide training to MSMEs on suitable financial instruments for SCP solutions.

Expected results of the project:

- 400 MSMEs improved their SCP measures and technologies;
- Four clusters are prepared to support SCP after the project completion;
- 20 national and regional policy makers, advisors and government bodies and institutions trained on SCP.



Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy production in the community-based tourism sector in Central Asia



Anna Martyres, Senior Project Development Officer for ACTED, delivered a presentation on reducing the carbon footprint of the community-based tourism sector (CBT) in Central Asia by supporting MSMEs in the Renewable Energy (RE), Energy Efficiency (EE) and CBT sectors to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices. Main impacts expected from this project include:

- Increased capacity of MSMEs in the RE-EE sector to develop business and technical skills, marketing & awareness raising among tourism sector;
- Increased demand for energy efficient and renewable energy technologies in the CBT sector.

Potential Priority Areas:

1. Improving legislation on SCP;
2. Eco-labelling of goods and services;
3. Energy certification of buildings connected to the tourism sector, agri-food, and textile industry.



Participants were divided into three groups for detailed discussions on chosen key priorities. Each group presented outcomes, key messages and an identified way forward.

Group discussion

- Value chain in the agri-food sector, mainstreaming SCP practices;
- Resource efficiency, including water consumption in the textile industry, management of polluters arising during the processes;
- Implementation of sustainable practices of resource efficiency / eco-standards / smart metering system in the tourism sector.

Value chain in agri-food sector, mainstreaming SCP practices



The group was moderated by **Isomiddin Akramov**, Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Discussions focused on establishing total costs of input of resources, development of policy to promote water efficiency, sustainability in the agri-food production and processing industries value chain in Uzbekistan.

Identified challenges:

- Lack of information for farmers;
- Absence of clusters approach in the agri-food sector;
- Limited support of MSMEs from the government.

Identified opportunities:

- Consulting farmers to adopt appropriate technologies;

- Implementing a climate change mitigation and adaptation approach for Uzbekistan.

Actions to be taken:

- Improve access to finance;
- Strengthen linkage among science, farmers, and public sector.

Recommendations:

- Increase the number of projects with participation of universities;
- Implement resource efficiency strategies to optimise their energy, water, raw material consumption and waste & wastewater reduction.

Resource efficiency including water consumption in the textile industry, management of polluters arising during the processes



The group was moderated by **Amar Munnolimath**, Project Manager of the **RUTSIS - Reviving Uzbekistan and Tajikistan’s Sustainable Ikat and Silk** project led by adelphi. Discussions focused on water scarcity in the textile sector, pollution from chemicals, streamlining traditional practices in farming in silk production by promoting silk and Ikat as a traditional symbol on different platforms (national, regional, international). Furthermore, discussions were held on how to increase the product range in the textile industry.

Identified challenges:

- Lack of innovative technologies in cotton/silk/Ikat production, including technology on drops irrigation;
- Lack of direct funding, capacity, standards in the sustainable textile industry.

Identified opportunities:

- The active involvement of universities in educational programs is sought because they already have training modules for stakeholders in the textile industry;
- Build tourism sector based on traditional textile, such as silk.

Actions to be taken:

- Strengthen the collaboration among Government and MSMEs;
- Implement Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the whole value chain of textile production;
- More value should be added to cotton processing and final products for export.



Implementation of sustainable practices of resource efficiency/ eco-standards/ smart metering system in the tourism sector

This group was moderated by **Dilfuza Sakirova**. Main discussions focused on the absence of specialists in the field of eco-tourism, no eco-routes for tourists, lack of partnership among Government and NGOs, and limited involvement of MSMEs.

Identified challenges:

- Difficult to access remote villages, identification of tourism zones;
- Lack of intergovernmental dialogue;
- Adaptation of international standards on sustainable production;
- Lack of investment;
- Need for qualified specialists.

Identified opportunities:

- Changing attitudes among the general public to resources (over-consumption);
- Support from main decision makers – “Chokimiyats” (local authorities);
- Implementation of green standards/ certificates.

Actions to be taken:

- Reduce carbon footprint in the tourism sector through effective resource management.
- Measuring water and energy consumption, implementing renewable energy facilities;
- Regional cooperation to strengthen tourist flows and allow for job creation.





CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Referring to the various presentations, the outcomes from the three working groups and related interactive discussions, the following recommendations and follow up actions should guide and structure policy actions and priority sectors on which the Government of Uzbekistan could focus, as well as the expected technical assistance that the EU SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility could consider providing.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- The need to further work on SCP by actively mainstreaming SCP in other relevant policies and action plans such as green economy, low carbon development strategy; an adequate governance mechanism will be necessary to ensure coordination and follow implementation;
- Value chain in agri-food sector, mainstreaming SCP practices should focus on a cluster approach in the agri-food sector, consulting farmers to attract appropriate technologies; value chain across the entire processing and production cycle;
- With regards to the textile industry, the main activity should be focused on water scarcity, management of pollution from chemicals, and streamlining traditional practices in farming in silk production.
- A great opportunity for the tourism sector in Uzbekistan and Central Asia is its unique location and historical sights. Therefore, eco-

tourism supported by the Government should be developed. It is needed to develop a package of services for MSMEs using international experience with close partnerships of all interested stakeholders.

- Awareness raising campaigns are strongly recommended at all stages of the activities with adequate information made accessible to concerned stakeholders.

Follow-up Activities

Follow-up activities might include, but are not limited to:

- Ministry of Economy and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan will prepare a specific demand letter to be addressed to the EU Delegation to provide technical assistance on the issues identified above, including proposals to further mainstream SCP in its Green Economy Strategy.
- The SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility will then prepare a related concept note and terms of references for a plan of activities, before moving to effective implementation with concerned partners.
- Of particular attention would be the need to exchange relevant experience and good practices from other countries, and also consider regional Central Asia activities such as green public procurement, eco-labelling, circular economy.

ANNEXES

- Annex 1: [Brochure and Agenda](#)
- Annex 2: [Press Release](#)
- Annex 3: [Presentations](#)
- Annex 4: [Photos](#)



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