

## FLASH REPORT

### SWITCH-ASIA GRANT PROJECTS LAUNCH IN CENTRAL ASIA



#### Background

Through its **grants scheme** the SWITCH-Asia programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) funds pilot projects helping companies to adopt cleaner technologies and more sustainable industrial practices as well as helping consumers to act more responsibly in their daily choices and lifestyles. Since 2007, this EU programme has funded more than 100 projects across a wide range of sectors (energy efficiency in industrial plants and houses, agri-food and fishing sectors, textiles and leather, tourism, logistics and freight) implemented by over 400 Asian and European partners, about 100 private sector associates, indirectly benefitting up to 70.000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

On 3rd and 4th March 2020, the **SWITCH-Asia Grant Projects Launch in Central Asia** organised by the SWITCH-Asia SCP Facility in close coordination with the European Commission's Directorate-General for International cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and the EU Delegations in Central Asia, took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, at Wyndham Tashkent Hotel.

The event brought together 60 participants, including representatives from implementing organisations of the seven newly awarded grant-funded projects in the region, the concerned EU Delegations in Central Asia, SWITCH-Asia National Focal Points within ministries of the five countries, and media professionals working on issues related to SCP and the environment.

Ambassador Eduards Stiprais, Head of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Uzbekistan stressed the importance of the SWITCH-Asia programme, recently expanded to Central Asia, in further supporting the country's ongoing work and achievements, in particular in the context of the European Green Deal. *"The European Green Deal puts a strong emphasis on supporting the transition to clean energy in line with a more ambitious climate policy. It also sets the principles for the EU commitment with its partner countries in this regard. "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" is increasingly a strategic objective in Europe".*

Specific sessions at this event covered EU and SWITCH-Asia programme priorities in Central Asia, as well as national and regional strategies for the implementation of SCP through the newly awarded grant projects focusing on energy efficiency and better supply chains in the touristic sector, sustainable agri-food and textiles. Each project

introduced their main priority area and the ways the latter relates to national relevant policies, including green economy, climate change and sustainable development policies.

In the closing session, Francois BEGEOT, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Uzbekistan, noted the importance of this launching of the grants projects for Central Asian countries to create a platform for exchanging information, best practices and accelerating impactful activities in agri-food, tourism and textile sectors. This is a great opportunity for scaling-up and replication of good practices.

## Key Observations

All grant projects have a good structured consortia with experienced specialists. The launch event offered a great opportunity for five of the grant projects in the tourism sector to connect among themselves in view of exchanging good practices during the implementation and looking for synergies. For the other priority sector, agri-food, it was suggested for the project to bring together agri-businesses in a cluster group to be able to use and share more energy efficient technologies during production and processing. With regards to the other priority sector, textiles, it was recommended to give more attention to the whole production process in terms of resources efficiency and to the final product in terms of quality and branding.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

Among other outcomes, the following could be highlighted:

- Projects should establish a constant communication between each other, especially those who work in the same sector.
- Creation of possible networking tools by SCP Facility would be highly welcomed to bridge Central Asian projects with the rest of Asia, for exchange of information and best practices
- Projects should understand that they are part of a bigger programme and that they should clearly align their action to the national country strategies/policies/SDGs indicators, and contribute as much as possible to both the Central Asia and European Union's sustainability objectives.

## Follow-up Activities

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

- Creation of an on-line platform based on the cluster approach for exchange of information among projects on good practices and green technologies throughout their implementation;
- Ensure the engagement of all concerned stakeholders during the implementation of projects, including Ministries, EU and local chambers of commerce, representatives of the private/business sector and other concerned actors from local, national and regional levels
- Involvement of students studying in the field of tourism in the implementation of projects.

Please find [photos](#) and [presentations](#) conducted during the event, as well as the [Brochure](#), including the Agenda, some [background information](#) and an overview of speakers.

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