

**Advisory Assistance Programme for Environmental Protection in
the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and
Central Asia**

Support of the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) by an integrated expert

Final Report 2008

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Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

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Support of the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) by an integrated expert

Project November 2006 – September 2008

Final Report

by

Alexander Juras

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**Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung (CIM),
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1. Introduction/General Description of the Objectives

This report summarises the main outcome of the CIM / UBA funded project to support the development of the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) by sending the long-term advisor Alexander Juras. The secondment of Mr. Juras which lasted from November 2006 to September 2008 has the following main objectives:

1. Increasing CAREC's role within the Environment for Europe Process, including the cooperation with other RECs and NGOs

2. Increasing CAREC's acquisition and implementation of projects, in particular in the water sector

3. Improvement of the organisational, management and finances structures at CAREC, capacity building of CAREC staff and introduction of project financing

As the Deputy Director of CAREC, Mr. Juras is fully integrated into the organization and has the main responsibility to ensure that with the involvement of CAREC staff the objectives of this project are met.

2. Activities in 2006 and 2007

2.1. Increasing the role of CAREC within the Environment for Europe Process, including the cooperation with other RECs and NGOs

2.1.1. Activities before Belgrade

The following activities took place under this sub-objective:

- Together with the CAREC staff, the objectives of the conference were reviewed and strategic objectives for CAREC were set. These objectives focused mainly on the implementation of the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development.
- In the frame of regular project manager meetings a list of project proposal was developed to be presented at the Belgrade Conference to interested donors (see Annex 1).
- Discussion of and finalizing of the Cat. II Paper on the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development
- Presentation of CAREC's plans for Belgrade to CAREC constituents, e.g. the ECOFORUM

- Two side events were prepared: Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development, Education for Sustainable Development
- A list of targeted PR Material was developed and printed (publications, project summaries, CD with publication, leaflets etc)
- A PR strategy for the conference was developed
- Responsibilities for addressing donors were agreed among the staff to participate in the Belgrade event
- Logistic arrangements were made (e.g. booking of exhibition, space, hotel, travel)
- Participation in EAP Taskforce Meetings: the author of the report participated in all EAP TF and EAP TF Bureau meetings before Belgrade, with the objective to increase the role of EECCA RECs after the Belgrade Conference. As a result, a common position paper of EECCA RECs and the OECD secretariat was developed (see Annex 4) and presented for consideration to the Bureau. This common paper that has been mainly initiated by the author of this report became the base of the decision of Ministers in Belgrade to have in future a joint TF secretariat of RECs and the OECD (see Belgrade Ministerial Declaration).
- Participation in drafting group for the Ministerial Declaration
- Consultations with EECCA RECs on Belgrade related issues
- Consultations and strategic discussions with the Szentendre REC
- Fundraising for covering travel costs of CAREC staff (with the Finnish MOE, successful)

2.1.2. CAREC's Role at the Belgrade Conference

Overall it can be stated that CAREC's participation in the Belgrade Conference was a full success:

-CAREC was able to reflect its image of a professional, international environmental organization from Central Asia

-The Ministerial Session on the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development was welcome by participants and referred to by the Ministerial Declaration

-Both side events were well attended

-Ministers confirmed in the declaration that EECCA RECs will gradually take over the role of the OECD vis a vis the EAP Taskforce

-Donors showed concrete interest in the projects presented by CAREC.

-The joint information stand of EECCA RECs raised a lot of interest among participants and large amount of information materials was distributed

-CAREC was able to network on to increase its number of possible project partners

-Kazakhstan was agreed as the place of the next Environment for Europe Conference

2.1.3. Cooperation with other RECs

In line with the proposal of CIM, the author of the report gave a special attention to the cooperation with other RECs. In particular the occasion of EAP Taskforce related meetings was used to coordinate activities of EECCA RECs. However, there was only limited interest from the Hungarian REC on cooperation with all EECCA RECs. Therefore, CAREC concentrated on bilateral cooperation with the Szentendre REC. Overall the following results were achieved:

-EECCA RECs agreed on a common position towards the Belgrade conference and their role in the EAP Taskforce (see above)

-EECCA RECs developed a list of projects to be presented to the EAP TF work plan and as a part of the common OECD/EECCA REC EAP TF work plan (Annex 5 and 6)

-EECCA RECs presented themselves jointly at the Belgrade conference

-A common leaflet and a common poster of EECCA RECs for the Belgrade conference was developed

-A joint proposal of all RECs, including the Szentendre REC on holding NGO consultations on the behalf of EBRD was developed and approved by EBRD

-Several consultations with the Szentendre REC took place, mainly in Szentendre, with the following outcome:

-REC staff, together with the Belgian consultancy prospect conducted and organizational assessment of CAREC. This assessment became the base for training programs and reorganization of CAREC

-A proposal to the BMU on training for CAREC staff in REC was developed and approved by UBA

-A proposal on a one year financial training program for CAREC financial staff, implemented by REC staff, including the introduction of a new, computer based management system (CARECtivity), was developed and approved by the Dutch MOE

-A joint REC CAREC proposal on a Training Program for Young Environmental Leaders was developed and approved by the Dutch MOE

-A joint proposal on the Green Pack for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was developed (feasibility study financed by OECD, Green Pack funding still pending but very likely)

-A joint proposal on training courses for sustainability, targeting governmental staff from Kazakhstan was developed and approved by the Italian government and British Gas

-A joint proposal of REC, CAREC and Royal Hasconing on the implementation of the Aarhus convention in Central Asia and in response of an EU tender was not successful. CAREC however managed to get subcontracted by the winner of the tender (ERM)

2.1.4. Development of Projects in Support of Belgrade Objectives

In CAREC, a process was initiated to systematically develop project ideas that support Belgrade objectives; the objectives of the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development (see Annex 3) and that are attractive for donors. These ideas were consulted with governmental representatives, NGOs and experts, using partly CAREC Country Offices.

As a result a list of project ideas could be produced that is shown in the annex 1. Some of the projects raised the interest of donors and negotiations are on the way. CAREC's management has decided that it was not necessary to develop a formal work plan for Belgrade but that the project list would replace the work plan.

2.1.5. Assistance in Fundraising

So far, CAREC was mainly relying on EU core funding and had only a small amount non profitable donor funded projects. The author of this report assisted CAREC in the development of projects as described above and in raising funds by:

-Visits to donors, in particular the EU, Germany and Netherlands

-Consultations with other donors on occasion of Belgrade related meetings. These proved to be an effective way, avoiding long business trips as originally planned.

-Assistance in the development of project proposals as described above

-Assistance in the creation of consortia for various EU tenders

2.2. Increasing CAREC's acquisition and implementation of projects, in particular in the water sector

2.2.1. EU Funding/EC 5

The author of this report became the responsible manager for the development of CAREC's new two year funding proposal (1.7 Mio. Euro for two years) to the Delegation of the European Union, CAREC's main donor so far. This task included:

- Preparation of draft proposal to the EU
- Discussion of the draft proposal with the EU Delegation
- Finalising the proposal with the involvement of CAREC staff

The decision of the EU is still pending but approval very likely (see proposal in Annex 7).

2.2.2. Project Development in environmental priority sectors, in particular in the water sector

As described above, the author was heavily involved in the preparation of projects to be presented to the Belgrade conference. At the same time project ideas were developed for CAREC's work plan 2008 – 2009 (see project pipeline in Annex 2). When developing projects an emphasis was given on the development projects that reflect CAREC's capacities, that are practical and that are within feasible budgets that do not scare donors. CAREC management decided that there was no need for a *formal* needs assessment but that instead the input of CAREC staff, country office staff NGO and governmental experts should be sought for. Informal needs assessments have also been done within the frame of the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable development.

A special attention was given to the water sector, including the following activities:

- Organization of a meeting of Central Asian Water experts in September 2007. The participants assessed the needs in the area of transboundary water management and the meeting resulted into the development of four ideas for transboundary projects, as presented in the annex 8.
- Preparation of a project idea on Training Courses for Transboundary Water Management and Integrated Water Resource Management (see list of Belgrade Projects in the annex 1). The project is based on successful similar projects implemented with the support of SIDA in Southern Africa.
- Creation of a Water Program, to be supervised by the author of this report. For this Program, currently a program manager is to be hired. It is his task to further develop the above mentioned projects and to present them to the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety for further consideration. It was agreed with the Ministry that – even there is still

the intention to finance a water project – a proposal will be submitted in spring 2008 by CAREC.

2.3. Improvement of the Organisational, Management and Finance Structures at CAREC, Capacity Building of CAREC Staff and Introduction of Project Financing

The author of this report is as the Deputy Director of CAREC directly involved in the management of CAREC and also reports to the Board of Directors of CAREC. His function as Deputy Director includes:

- Supervision of the Information, Public Initiatives, Education for Sustainable Development Programs and the Human Resource Department
- Responsibility for EU funding
- Responsibility for the relations with other RECs with a special focus on REC Szentendre
- Development and Supervision of REC Country Offices
- Providing Strategic Advice to the Executive Director

2.3.1 Assistance to the Organizational Development of CAREC, Structural Changes

Based on the organizational assessment implemented by REC staff, it was decided to re-organise CAREC effective in 2008 with the following main changes:

- Introduction of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Water, and Environmental Management Tools Programs
- Streamlining Country Office Activities
- Creation of the Position of a Fundraising Coordinator
- Re-negotiations of the charter with the signatories
- Re-negotiations of the seat agreement with its signatories

2.3.2 Human Resource Management, including training activities

Under this heading, the following activities were implemented:

- A new HR Manual was developed (see Annex 9), including new incentive and reimbursement mechanisms
- Internal training needs were assessed and an in-house training program was started
- Proposals to Germany and The Netherlands to enhance capacities of CAREC were developed (see above)
- A HR Department was set up
- The chain of command between Headquarters and Country Offices was re-defined

2.3.3 CAREC Administration

As a Deputy Director the author of this report is also responsible for the overall administration of CAREC. Together with the Head of the ED Office, a new Administration Manual of CAREC was developed and presented to the Board of Directors. Furthermore, regular senior management meetings, as well as staff meetings were introduced to ensure a better flow of information and more transparency in CAREC.

With respect to financial administration of CAREC the following activities took place:

- Introduction of the Workday Charge approach in project budgeting
- Introduction of a time sheet system
- Preparation of a project proposal to the Dutch MOE to improve the financial capacities of CAREC
- Introduction of a new system for profitability analysis of projects

2.3.4 Supervision of Programs

The author of this report supervised in 2006 and 2007 the following programs: Information, Education of Sustainable Development, Public Initiatives, and Human Resource

The following activities took place:

- Regular team meetings
- Hiring of a new Head for the Information Program
- Development and implementation of new TORs for the Information Program
- Project Development and Fundraising activities
- Hiring of new program staff
- Development of the HR Manual and supervision of the HR Manager
- Hiring of new HR manager
- Work Plan Preparations

2.3.5 Country Office Development

As the Deputy Director, the author of this report also supervises the Country Office Network with offices in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The following activities took place:

- Visits to all Country Offices. These visits also included meetings with CAREC constituents in the given countries

- Development of a Country Offices Assessment (see Annex 10), presentation of the assessment to the Board of Directors. The Board approved the suggested measures

- Hiring of new Country Office Director Tajikistan

- Preparation of a Country Office Manual (see Annex 11)

2.4. Other Activities

Other activities included:

- Preparation of project proposal for REC Moldova for a training program with CAREC

- Organisation of a meeting of CIM environmental experts from Central Asia and the Caucasus

- Participation in a meeting of CIM and GTZ Experts in Central Asia in Uzbekistan

- Regular Meetings with visitors to REC

- Cooperation with EU evaluators

- Answering of Information Requests

3. Activities in 2008

3.1. Increasing the role of CAREC within the Environment for Europe Process, including the cooperation with other RECs and NGOs

3.1.1. Translating the results of the Belgrade Conference into Concrete Projects

During the post Belgrade period, CAREC tried to build on the achieved results and on new contacts with possible donors. Activities included

- Further elaboration of joint EECCA REC project proposals to the EAP TF. The proposals that have been already developed before the Belgrade Conference were further developed, taking into account comments from EAP TF members. So far this has not led to new funding, due to the fact that most donors did already commit all their funds for 2009.

- Discussions with DG Environment and the Kazakh Ministry of Environment on an enhanced role of CAREC within the Environmental for Europe Process. In light of the fact that the upcoming Ministerial Conference in 2011 will be held in Astana, CAREC has initiated discussions with the Kazakh MOE and DG Env. on the possible role of CAREC within the preparation phase. CAREC has suggested a strong involvement in publicizing and discussing the results of the process so far and suggested to have a strong focus on the projects listed in the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development.

- Preparation of a Meeting of all EECCA RECs
Steps were taken to organize a meeting of all RECs that was held in mid August 2008 in Kyrgyzstan (see annex 1/2008)

- Strengthening the cooperation with REC Szentendre
During 2008, several visits to REC Szentendre took place in order to prepare joint projects, discuss ongoing projects and to develop joint positions. As a result, REC and CAREC developed joint projects for the EBRD (two projects, one funded, one rejected), the European Union and the German MOE (not yet finalized). A training course for CAREC, funded by the German MOE took place in February 2008 in Szentendre and with Dutch support, REC assisted CAREC in optimizing its project management by introducing the project management system "REctivity".

3.1.2. Providing assistance to CAREC in Fundraising

The author of the is report visited during 2008 Brussels, Norway and Germany to discuss possibilities to fund projects related to the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable development and to those presented to the EAP TF.

3.1.3. Assistance in Project Implementation

The author provided ongoing support to the implementation of projects implemented in the departments under his supervision (Environmental Education, Water, Civil Initiatives, and Environmental Management). Most related activities were focused on

the implementation of the EU funded projects (core funding), because donors represented in the EAP TF were not able to provide financial support for the year 2008, as most funds were already allocated.

3.2. Increasing CAREC's acquisition and implementation of projects, in particular in the water sector

3.2.1. Funding from the European Union/EC 5

The EU Delegation in Kazakhstan processed CAREC's proposal submitted in 2007 for several months and came to the conclusion to request CAREC to split the submitted proposal into two projects, what was done by the author. The new proposal for 2008 was submitted in June 2008 and signed in July 2008. It provides financing of core projects until the end of 2008 (see annex 2/2008). A second proposal for 2009 will be submitted in September 2008

3.2.2 Forming a new water department

The author provided assistance in the setting up and development of a new water department that started activities in the beginning of 2008. Currently the department is staffed with three people.

3.2.3 Preparation of a project proposal in the water sector to the German Ministry of Environment

The German MOE informed CAREC that it is advisable that the planned project on training in transboundary water management should be implemented in cooperation with a German partner. In response, CAREC contacted INVENT and GTZ. Due to the fact that both organisations, but in particular GTZ are currently preparing a major water project for the German Foreign Ministry, no final conclusion could be reached with GTZ, however discussions are going on. After the author's departure from CAREC, CAREC's Executive Director will follow up on this issue. It is envisaged that a concrete project proposal will be presented by autumn 2008.

3.2.4 Assistance to Fundraising with International Donors in the Water Sector

The author of the report assisted CAREC in fundraising with international donors, in particular with the European Union, UNECE, Norway and within the EAP TF context. There was no need for further donor negotiations because at CAREC there would have been no additional capacities to implement further projects. This work included:

- Preparation of a Project Proposal to the EU Delegation on the Harmonisation of Water Standards in Central Asia

The author was involved and guided the preparation of a proposal on the harmonization of Water Standards in Central Asia. The project was contracted in August 2008 (see annex 3/2008)

- Preparation of a Proposal for UNECE "Water Quality in Central Asia" (see annex 4/2008). The project will be funded.

-Preparation of a Proposal, together with Ramboll Denmark on Water Governance in Central Asia for the European Union.

This proposal has been mismanaged by the express service DHL and did therefore not reach the donor in time.

-Preparation of a Project Proposal “Water Supply in Rural Areas in Central Asia” for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway (see annex 5/2008)

3.2.5 Other projects

Other projects that were developed with the assistance of the author included:

-Preparation of a Proposal for the Dutch MOE

The author prepared a proposal for the Dutch MOE, focusing on a continuation of the Training for Young Environmental Leaders Program and on CAREC Capacity Building.

-Preparing a Proposal on Post Kyoto Dialogue, together with REC Szentendre for the European Union.

Unfortunately this proposal was rejected.

3.2.6 Assistance in the implementation of projects.

The author assisted in particular in the implementation of the following projects:

- EC 4 (EU core funding 2006 - 2008)
This major project covered most of CAREC’s activities.
- Training of Young Leaders (funded by Dutch MOE)
- RECTivity (funded by Dutch MOE)
- REC-CAREC Training in Hungary

3.3. Improvement of the Organisational, Management and Finance Structures at CAREC, Capacity Building of CAREC Staff and Introduction of Project Financing

The author of this report was also in 2008 as the Deputy Director of CAREC directly involved in the management of CAREC and also reports to the Board of Directors of CAREC. His function as Deputy Director included in 2008:

-Supervision of the Environmental Management, Civil Society Support, Education for Sustainable Development, Water, Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Programs and the Human Resource Department

-Responsibility for EU funding

-Responsibility for the relations with other RECs with a special focus on REC Szentendre

-Development and Supervision of CAREC Country Offices

-Providing Strategic Advice to the Executive Director

3.3.1 Assistance to the Organizational Development of CAREC, Structural Changes

The legal status of CAREC (de jure Kazakh NGO, de facto International Organisation) was not satisfactory and therefore CAREC decided to call a signatory meeting. On that meeting, signatories (Central Asian Countries, the EU and UNDP) decided that CAREC will have a new charter that will allow the organization to be recognized in Central Asia and beyond as a full fledged international organization. It is expected that CAREC will reach this status by the end of 2008. Germany was invited to consider becoming a signatory.

Furthermore, CAREC achieved to get a special status regarding work permits that allows CAREC to hire not-Kazakh staff without problems.

3.3.2 Human Resource Management, including training activities

Under this heading, the following activities were implemented:

- Arranging Medical Insurance for all staff
- Hiring a new HR manager
- New proposals to Germany and The Netherlands to enhance capacities of CAREC were developed

A CAREC retreat was organized for August 2008 (see annex 6/2008)

3.3.3 CAREC Administration

As a Deputy Director the author of this report was also in 2008 responsible for the overall administration of CAREC. Activities included

- Organizing regular management meetings
- Providing assistance to the Finance Department
- Review of the Administration Manual in line with Board Decisions

3.3.4 Supervision of Programs

The author of this report supervised in 2008 the following programs/departments: Education for Sustainable Development, Civil Society Support, Water, Environmental Management, Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and Human Resource

The following activities took place:

- Regular team meetings
- Hiring of new Heads for the HR Department and the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Program
- Participation in Job Interviews for program positions
- Project Development and Fundraising activities
- Work Plan Preparations and supervision of work plan implementation

3.3.5 Country Office Development

As the Deputy Director, the author of this report also supervised the Country Office Network with offices in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The following activities took place:

- Visits to Bishkek and Dushanbe
- Ending of contracts of Country Office Directors in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
- Pre-selection of candidates for the position of Country Office Directors in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
- Ongoing supervision of Country Offices

4. Conclusions

While it was not always possible to strictly follow the objectives of the proposal to UBA, it can be stated that the overall objectives of the project were met.

A particular problem has been that CAREC had major difficulties in hiring professional staff. At one time there have been 12 openings. This led to delays in project implementation, but also reflects the importance of providing foreign experts, e.g. via CIM.

Overall it can be stated that the secondment provided valuable support to CAREC but also that it is very important that this support is continued, if possible by providing more than one expert.