

MINUTES

Of the Local Project Advisory Committee (LPAC) Meeting for the project:

“Integrity Risk Assessment in Water Sector”

March 11, 2010

Participants:

- Chairman:* 1. Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative
- Members:* 2. Kibriyo Jumaeva, UNDP Programme Analyst
3. Tahmina Anvarova, UNDP Programme Finance Analyst
4. Alisher Karimov, SEIG Project Manager
- Invitees:* 5. Saifullo Safarov, Deputy Head of Strategic Research Centre under the President of RT
6. Ali Saidzoda, Head of Corruption Prevention Unit Agency on State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption RT
7. Suhrob Kohiri, Deputy Head of Corruption Prevention Unit, Agency on State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption RT
8. Muattar Khaidarova, Director, NGO “Society and Law”
9. Anatoliy Kholmatov – IWRM project UNDP Communities Programme Water Expert
10. Margarita Mamedova, Executive Manager, NGO “Panorama”
11. Ismat Eshmirzoev, Head of Department of Water Consumers Association, Ministry of Water and land reclamation
- Secretary:* 12. Zarina Juraeva, SEIG Project Assistant

Agenda:

1. Presentation of the “Integrity Risk Assessment in Water Sector” Project
2. Discussion over the project document
3. Recommendations

Minutes

Introduction:

Mr. Khoshmukhamedov opened the meeting greeting all participants and informed participants about the aim and objectives of the meeting i.e. review, discuss and approve the project document on “Integrity Risk Assessment in Water Sector”. The current initiative intends to be implemented in the frame of Transparency and Accountability initiative which is implemented within State Enhancement for Improved Governance Project. The estimated budget for this project is USD 200,000 and further fundraising will be negotiated with other donors as well as with Oslo Governance Centre upon completion of the first year and achievement initial results. The project is planned for the period of 3 years which is 2010-2012. Following UNDP Programme procedures a Local Project Advisory Committee meeting is to be conducted involving all relevant stakeholders and representatives from the state agencies as well as CSOs to review, comment and approve the project document.

Presentation:

Mr. Karimov introduced all participants with the project goal and objectives of the project in more details. Firstly this project is funded and approved by Oslo Governance Centre for further implementation. This initiative will be lead and implemented by national partners, however for the initial step as for the development of the methodology and other toolkits for the assessment, where needed, an international expertise will be attracted. The Agency on State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption RT, being one of the main partners of the SEIG project, is responsible for corruption prevention, conduction of analyses, defining its causes and developing other manuals for its mitigation, and is considered as one of the key partner in the current intervention. It will be fully involved as other relevant state and CSO partners in development of the corruption mitigation action plan in the aftermath of the project completion.

The overall goal of the project is to support the Government of Tajikistan and the international community in attaining the goals of the MDG-based National Development Strategy and National Anti Corruption Strategy. To ensure the quality of the initiative and substantive matters, a group of experts from academia, media, and CSO backgrounds will be compounded to provide inputs both for constructing and contextualizing the assessment. The following multi-stakeholder model will be followed up: 1) High-level *Advisory Group* (composed of respected representatives from relevant state ministries, parliament and relevant CSOs) established to provide overall guidance and leadership on the initiative, for validating results, and for presenting and disseminating assessment findings; 2) Multi-stakeholder expert '*Research Group*' responsible for methodology development, coordination of data collection activities, and analysis of data collection.

Initially it was agreed to comprise the High Level Advisory Group from the following group:

- the Anti-Corruption Agency
- State Advisor to the President on Legal Affairs
- the Strategic Research Centre
- newly established Ombudsman
- Ministry of Water and Land Reclamation
- relevant Parliamentary Committees
- relevant civil society organization(s),

The Experts group will be constituted from different actors that will focus on the integrity risk assessment analyzing all the existing relevant documents, legislation regulating or relatively linked to the water sector. The data collection will be conducted via focus group interviews, filled questionnaires to identify the water sector integrity vulnerabilities. In addition, mitigation matrix plan will be developed outlining the risks of corruption and the measures to be taken.

Discussion:

Mr. Saidzoda noted that the project is timely and there is a necessity on this project and the Anticorruption Agency would like to support the initiative. Some examples from international experience were shared on the need to clarify the role and the responsibilities of the stakeholders.

Mrs. Khaidarova commented that the initiative is very timely and crucial for the country. She was interested to know more about the selection criteria of the national partners. Based on the nature of the future assessment she emphasized a need to concretize the selection of the agencies or relevant experts for further assessment conduction.

Mr. Khoshmukhamedov noted that all relevant national experts to be involved in the assessment would be selected through a competitive process based on UNDP rules. As for the Advisory Group,

it is comprised from the main Project Partners, relevant state agencies, and CSO representatives having a role in a focus sector.

Mr. Safarov commented that there is no need to involve other than the ministries and agencies that were mentioned earlier. All the participants of LPAC meeting could play a significant role according to their spheres and experience.

Ms. Jumaeva explained that this is the first step to move forward with the initiative. After the comprehensive review UNDP proposes to conduct concrete steps to assess the Governance mechanism within water sector. Experts will be assigned to deliver their work according to their job description. After the completion of the assessment the action plan will be developed with national partners of the current project identifying the ways how to prevent the risks of corruption in water sector. It is intended that the consultative group would consist of relevant ministries, NGOs and independent national experts.

Mr. Khohiri noted that the issues of water are related to the energy sector as well and accordingly the involvement of the Ministry of Energy is essential on this regard. Additionally, it was noted that it would be necessary to inform relevant agencies in a formal way via official letter outlining the planned initiative.

Mr. Khoshmukhamedov informed that the project is planning to conduct an Inception Workshop in May where all planned activities will be discussed and reviewed, it might well be that some of activities can be improved or changed, besides the Project objectives and outcomes. It was marked that probably other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Development, Ministry of Energy and Industry, Tax Committee are to be involved in the project implementation. He highlighted that a project Steering Committee meetings are foreseen to be held every 6 months.

Mr. Eshmirzoev commented that the project is timely and corruption exists in water sector. First of all, corruption occurs in estimation of the water resources. Particularly, there is an immense number of insufficient water distribution and its usage. The improper control and regulation of the irrigation system also leads to corruption practices as long as this system is not able to leak the amount of water as it was for example in soviet period but administrators use the same figures from the past without any proper estimation. In addition, it was proposed to pay attention to the mechanism of granting privileges on water consumption in irrigated zones and defining tariffs on water usage that also lead to risks of corruption.

Mr. Kholmatov proposed to focus on three main areas during the assessment process such as:

1. Regulatory legal norms that includes review of all water sector legal framework, its gaps and weaknesses.
2. Organizational- technical part that includes review of system of the proper water distribution and estimation of water resources.
3. Financial-economical issues that include review of the payment system, tariffs and privileges.

Conclusion:

All participants agreed that this initiative is very timely and crucial for Tajikistan will provide full support to it. It was recommended to have more such important initiatives. To conclude all LPAC members recommended the following actions to be taken:

- Minutes of the LPAC outlining the discussion on the project Document to be signed;
- The Project Document is to be signed by UNDP Country Director and the minutes of this meeting to be sent to OGC;

Taking into account all comments discussed during the meeting and results of discussions mentioned above, all LPAC members agreed to approve the “**Integrity Risk Assessment in Water Sector**” project document.

Prepared by:



Zarina Juraeva
UNDP SEIG Project Assistant

Chairman:



Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov
UNDP Assistant to Resident Representative