

CONCEPT

of the 12th Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development (CALP)

“Sustainable Consumption and Production and Circular economy policies and tools as drivers to green recovery and building forward better

September 20-24, 2021, Almaty, Kazakhstan
On-line event covering Central Asia and Afghanistan

1. BACKGROUND: LEADERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN TRANSFORMATIONS

1.1. YOUTH LEADERSHIP. CALP is a unique leadership programme of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) undertaken since 2010. It is designed to improve leadership capacity of young and mid-level managers of various environmental agencies and focuses on multiple sustainable development challenges in the region. It is organized annually and involves government, academic, private sector, and NGO representatives – a multi-stakeholder approach that helps to ensure a comprehensive understanding of environmental and sustainable development issues from a regional perspective and that enables decision-makers to better deliver on sustainability through Sustainable Consumption and Production/SCP and Circular Economy.

Young people represent a key stakeholder group that CAREC engages to help drive environmental transformations towards sustainability through collective leadership across the borders of Central Asia, with the understanding of collective leadership as *“the capacity of a collective to catalyze change for the common good”*¹.

1.2. CALP: A PLATFORM FOR LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN CENTRAL ASIA

CALP, being a flagship initiative of CAREC, is designed to equip young leaders of the region with cutting-edge knowledge and innovative leadership methodologies in responding to global, regional, and national environmental challenges. It also promotes the participation of young leaders in environmental decision-making by using their leadership skills and increasing their knowledge².

CALP is the only regular program to increase the potential among young people for sustainable development in Central Asia, having become a recognized platform for the development of regional youth cooperation. ***Over 11 years from 2010 to 2020, more than 330 young people from five countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan - representatives of state environmental, water and energy sectors, NGOs, universities, and the green business - have graduated from the CALP.*** From year to year, CAREC receives more and more nominations from state bodies of Central Asian countries, NGOs, and regional organizations, which confirms recognition and relevance of the program by national partners.

1.3. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

In 1972, at the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the global community started questioning the impacts of *consumption and production* patterns. The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development sought to help Governments find ways to halt the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and pollution of the planet, highlighting the necessity for cleaner production. At the Earth Summit 2002, the necessity for promoting sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns has been clearly recognized, emerging as a practical and systemic approach to sustainability issues in the global context.

¹ <https://www.collectiveleadership.de/blog/article/the-future-of-leadership/>

² https://carececo.org/en/main/ckh/publications/otchet-o-10-y-yubileynoy-tsapl_2/

Later the concept of SCP has integrated the need for decoupling economic growth from environmental impacts and increased resource use. Promoting resource efficiency and SCP are essential for delivering a green growth/economy, a low carbon economy, a circular economy and sustainable development. This was in fact the main rationale for establishing the SWITCH-Asia programme. *The aim is to provide necessary knowledge and capacity to government bodies and other stakeholders in order to facilitate their “Switching to SCP”.*

SWITCH-Asia is the largest Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) programme supported by the European Union involving 24 countries from Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Mongolia and China. In line with the priorities of the European Green Deal, the programme aims to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in Asia decoupling it from environmental degradation and to support Asian countries in their transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and a more circular economy while contributing to poverty reduction. The programme promotes mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production in relevant national policies and supports the transition towards a green economy, poverty reduction and climate mitigation.

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. The last call for proposal was launched in 2019 and 23 new grant projects were awarded, out of which seven grant projects were awarded to the Central Asian region focused on tourism, agri-food and textile sectors.

Central Asian countries and Afghanistan are at different stages in terms of awareness raising and policies towards shifting to SCP. Most of SCP related activities have been conducted and implemented by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the One Planet Network/10 Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10 YFP). The first regional meeting on SCP for Central Asian countries was organized by UNEP and the Secretariat of 10YFP in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in November 2015. During the Workshop, challenges and opportunities were discussed together with priority areas for the implementation of SCP policies and tools. *Main regional challenges traced the link between poor management of water and energy resources and the significant impact this has on food supply and security, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation.* A second meeting for Central Asia and East European countries was held in Romania in 2016. Moreover, the Secretariat of 10YFP started a regional project on Sustainable Public Procurement for three Central Asia countries – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan.

Currently, the SWITCH-Asia Sustainable Consumption and Production Facility (SCPF) is providing Technical Assistance to four Central Asian Countries, at their demand, structured around priorities identified by concerned stakeholders in those countries. Aiming at assisting the countries in better delivering their sustainable development and green economy policies, the SCP Facility is actually providing needed support for a series of priorities and activities, such as preparation of SCP Action plans, implementation of SCP tools and circular economy approach in the following sectors: textile and garment, food/biodegradable waste management, agri-food and energy efficiency in buildings. While these could be better perceived from a production side perspective, the other side of the coin, the consumption patterns are also given due attention, being extremely relevant for Central Asian region and Afghanistan, when considering their quickly evolving life style and consumer behavior, that should be put back on the sustainability and responsibility path, so as to minimise the impact on the environment and build forward more resilient societies.

Regional structures such as the Inter-state Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) and CAREC play important roles in promoting SCP at regional and national levels, as well as providing the framework for capacity building to deliver needed changes.

2. IMPLEMENTING AND SUPPORTING PARTNERS

In 2021 the organizing team of the 12th CALP invites national and international partners to co-create and support the 12th Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, the SWITCH ASIA Programme of the European Union, the World Bank and OSCE Secretariat are invited to support the 12th CALP.

3. MEETING NEW CHALLENGES

3.1. COVID-2019 and its consequences

In 2020-2021, humanity met a new challenge – the corona virus pandemic. In the light of the global pandemic COVID-2019, there is an immediate need for an urgent recovery of economies, the environment, and adaptation to the new challenges in relation to the health and education systems, including the Central Asian region. The world faced not only a serious health crisis with a relative new disease, with over 130 million infected people and hundreds of thousands of people dead, but also society was in lock-down, social contacts were restricted to minimum, schools were closed, economies were locked, millions of jobs lost, and significant travel restrictions as a result³.

At the same time, today humanity has opened up new opportunities for development, especially in the field of environmental protection. *Environmentalists today can act as agents of green change*, and approaches such as green recovery, building back better and risk informed development are the important thematic areas that both governments of many countries and international organizations are working on.

4. 12th CALP: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 12th CALP will be mainly focused on sustainable consumption and production/circular, green economy, management of water and energy resources and their significant impact on food supply and security, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation, transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of Central Asia countries and Afghanistan will be discussed from the point of view of recovery of economies, environment, and adaptation to the new challenges in relation to the health and education systems.

The overarching goal of the 12th CALP is provision of necessary knowledge and capacity to young leaders from government bodies and other stakeholders in order to facilitate their switching to Sustainable Consumption and Production/circular economy in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The main objectives of the 12th CALP are:

- Raising awareness on the necessity for SCP policies and tools to foster green economy delivery and transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy among the 12th CALP' participants;
- Strengthen capacity of young people and increasing the role of youth in promoting of SCP and green economy;
- Discuss a link between management of water and energy resources and their significant impact on food supply and security, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation and how implementation of SCP tools and circular economy approach can be impactful to resource efficiency in these sectors;
- Promote of implementation of the SCP policies at the national level, demonstration of results of the grant projects and supports dialogue with interesting stakeholders in Central Asia and Afghanistan;
- Provide an innovative and action-oriented regional platform on SCP and green economy for youth dialogue in Central Asia;

³ Draft Outline document on the UNECE ESD Strategic Planning for 2030, 2020

- Raise awareness on sustainable consumption and responsible consumers' behavior among communities in Central Asia and Afghanistan;
- Build capacity for Collective Leadership at the individual, team, and stakeholder systems levels for analyzing and planning transformative decision-making processes, and concrete initiatives for sustainable development;
- Demonstrate public and youth engagement, regional and local mobilization and actions, and involvement of communities, civil society, public sector, private sector, and youth in multi-stakeholder partnerships in the COVID-19 and post-COVID activities.

Thematic areas:

1. Sustainable consumption and production (SCP)

- Resource efficiency (materials, water, energy)
- Textile and garment
- Housing and building
- Agri-food/value chain approach
- Sustainable tourism
- Waste/ plastics Management including prevention, re-using, recycling
- Sustainable Public Procurement/eco-labelling
- Consumers change behavior awareness raising and promoting sustainable behaviors:
 - Consumers change behavior and awareness raising campaigns
 - Sustainable/healthier lifestyle
 - value chain towards consumers to make sustainable choices
 - Marketing of environmentally friendly products

2. Management of water and energy resources and the significant impact on food supply and security, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation

3. Collective Leadership and multi-stakeholder partnerships, with a focus on SDG 17

4. Role and capabilities of youth in strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Principles of the 12th CALP:

1. *"Think globally, act locally, collaborate regionally!"*
2. *Transparency* - an online system for registration, all countries are represented in the selection committee; the list of selected candidates is published publicly.
3. *Environmentally friendly* – CALP web application <http://calp.carececo.org/mobile/>
4. *Online learning* - greetings and key presentations by national, regional and international experts will be made remotely via Skype, video presentations or on the ZOOM online platform.
5. *Openness* – partners from international organizations and programs, financial institutions, civil society organizations and private sector will be given the opportunity to moderate CALP thematic sessions.

The Programme Overview:

An innovative approach will bring together a series of the following trainings and modules:

- A series of seminars and interaction led by CAREC/SCP Facility with reputable international partners, including the UN Environment, OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, SWITCH ASIA Programme of the European Union, World Bank, and the OSCE Secretariat,
- Regional leaders and CALP alumni that will inform and inspire participants, especially on topics of SCP, green economy, low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy, and

- Integrating environmental and social initiatives into crisis recovery programs and COVID-19 response strategies.

5. TARGET GROUPS

CAREC in cooperation with partners plan to conduct the 12th CALP for environmental young leaders of Central Asia and Afghanistan with a thematic focus on SCP, green economy, low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy, collective leadership, and recovery after COVID-19. It is expected that in 2021, representatives of the following groups will participate in the 12th CALP:

- young environmental leaders from the following state agencies related to the SCP and green development issues – ministries of agriculture, environment, water and energy;
- green business representatives;
- civil society organizations of Central Asia and Afghanistan, working in the field of SCP, green economy, resource-efficient and circular economy.

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

Outputs:

- Shared information and knowledge on SCP as tools, to foster transition to green resource-efficient economy and interlinked with low-carbon strategies;
- Built capacities of the 12th CALP' participants for implementing SCP and enhancing policy dialogue at national and regional level and increasing the role in promoting of SCP and green economy;
- Shared European and Asian good practices on SCP and scaling up it in Central Asia and Afghanistan;
- Discussed management of water and energy resources and their significant impact on food supply and security, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation;
- Strengthened cooperation and networking of young environmental leaders and CALP alumni from governments, NGO and green business on SCP;
- Increased collective leadership capacity among participants, with a focus on personal development, systems analysis, and concrete planning of sustainability initiatives within the context of strategic COVID-19 responses.

Outcomes:

- Provided support to implementation of the SCP policies at the national level, demonstration of results of the grant projects and supports dialogue with stakeholders in Central Asia and Afghanistan;
- Strengthened a base for the following regulatory framework and business-related environment;
- Envisaged replication mechanisms and established a base for the best practices developed in the past sharing and exchange between and inside the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan;
- Strengthened the action-oriented regional platform for going beyond preparatory activities (studies, etc.) and testing new approaches;
- Provided support of implementation of the SCP policies at the national level, demonstration of results of the grant projects and support of the dialogue with stakeholders in Central Asia and Afghanistan.