

Astana "Green Bridge" Initiative

Kazakhstan

June 2012

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Introduction

The Astana "Green Bridge" Initiative was approved at the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED-6), organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Astana from the 27th September to 2nd of October 2010. The UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, at its seventeenth session (2-5 November 2010, Geneva), agreed to Kazakhstan's proposal to include the "Green Bridge" Initiative in the draft agenda for the first day of the plenary session, and invited interested stakeholders to actively participate in the process of development of the Partnership Programme of Work of the Initiative, which might become one of the Conference outcomes. Following recommendations from MCED-6 and the seventeenth session on the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Government of Kazakhstan proposed to develop a preliminary draft of the 10-year "Green Bridge" Partnership Programme.

Quick facts

Zone	Europe, Asia and the Pacific
Topic	Regional, trans-regional and inter-sectoral cooperation to enable the implementation of principles of "green" economy
Website	www.greenbridgepartnership.net/eng/

Case Study



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Initiative details

The Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative aims to stimulate regional, trans-regional and inter-sectoral cooperation, and to enable the implementation of principles of “green” economy. The latter relate to changing political and economic conditions, environmental priorities and the growing needs of the countries of Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

The key thematic areas of the Initiative include:

- (a) Eco-efficient use of natural resources and investment in ecosystem services;
- (b) Low carbon development and adaptation to climate change;
- (c) Promotion of sustainable urban development;
- (d) Promotion of green business and green technology; and
- (e) Promotion of sustainable lifestyles and improvement of quality of life.

A wide range of strategic approaches have been proposed to achieve the main goals of the initiative, including (a) catalyzing high-level, high-visibility policy dialogues on emerging and persistent issues; (b) undertaking research on emerging and cutting-edge policy solutions and tools; (c) building the capacity of policymakers to further develop, adopt and implement green-growth policies, while taking stock of best practices/methodologies and legislative and economic instruments; (d) developing new and strengthening existing mechanisms for technology transfer that will contribute to the preservation of European, Asian and Pacific ecosystems of global environmental significance; and (e) developing mechanisms to attract green investments and innovative environmental management approaches, including cross-border adjustments and the application of economic incentives, taxes and fees.

The Programme is multilateral and long-term – a more stable basis for green investments, a mechanism for the transfer of investments, new technologies and innovations from developed countries to the developing world, and the creation of new and sustainable green jobs. The “Green Bridge” Programme is proposed as an effective

mechanism, for complementing and supplementing existing programmes with elements such as connection with the real sector of economy, investments, and technologies. Briefly, the essence of the “Green Bridge” Programme is a mechanism for the greening of the economy to increase the level and quality of life, especially in developing countries, through the development and support of new green industries and the creation of a long-term and stable basis through favorable legal, economic and institutional conditions and reform.

On the topic of green economy, many convincing reports and recommendations have already been developed (UNEP, OECD, ESCAP, G-20, etc.). There are many examples of successful national strategies, such as those in Denmark, Germany, the Republic of Korea and other countries. However, practical mechanisms and mechanisms of regional level for the transition to a green economy, the transfer of green technology and green investment have not yet been developed.

Without such a practical mechanism – ie. a “bridge” between environmental protection, investments and innovations – efforts by policy makers will remain divided: economy and ecology, government programs and the business sector, developed countries with their standards, technology and innovation and the developing world – with its natural resources that are so important for the global stability of ecosystems.

The Green Bridge program provides simple, available and practical measures to support reform and create infrastructures for the integration of green technologies and the attraction of private investments, as well as the transfer of successful experience to other countries and organizations. For example, using modern means of information and communication, the Programme will be able to provide free assistance to countries and to any organizations for advice on new technologies or innovations, but also to use other countries’ experiences in reforming policies to attract green investments and projects.

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The transition to a green economy requires international support for many reasons: First, this is a cross-border ecosystem, the preservation of which is impossible in the framework of countries. Second, the transition to a green economy is linked to various issues, such as international trade, improving financial and economic mechanisms, the harmonization of legislation, and the exchange of experiences. Thirdly, many future projects related to green economy are regional in nature. Green economy for the development of regional markets for sustainable energy, organic agriculture, interregional transport corridors, and the management of transboundary water re-

sources requires multilateral cooperation.

Kazakhstan, together with partners, will be conducting a side event on the “Green Bridge” Partnership Programme during Rio +20. It will be presented as a contribution of the countries of Asia, the Pacific and Europe in the promotion of green economy.

Reference:

<http://www.greenbridgepartnership.net/eng/index.php/en/component/content/article/123--22-23>