



# Inception Report

Almaty Green City Action Plan

September 2020



  
**European Bank**  
for Reconstruction and Development

  
**Resources & Waste**  
Advisory Group

 **ARCADIS** Design & Consultancy  
for natural and  
built assets

 **Federal Ministry**  
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# 1. Background and content

The aim of the Green City Action Plan (GCAP) for the City of Almaty is to address the existing environmental and urban development challenges in a systematic way, while considering its social concerns, including gender. It will provide input to optimize the City's financial and personnel capacity, while addressing the urban issues with great environmental benefits and social and gender co-benefits.

The GCAP project in Almaty commenced on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2020. The Official Launch Event of the project took place on 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2020.

The content of the inception report includes:

- Updated project plan
- Cooperation and communication with Almaty municipality (Akimat)
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- Details regarding the GCAP approval process and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Identified project risks and mitigation strategies; and
- Summary of the Launch Event and First Stakeholder Engagement Workshop.

We intend to keep project documents short and concise. Should further details be necessary regarding any of the information presented in the inception report, we are ready to provide the answers via emails or during the project progress calls.

## 2. Inception Phase

### 2.1. Team mobilization

Two online internal zoom meetings were dedicated to team mobilization during the inception phase of the project.

The first mobilization meeting, held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2020 was organized between the local team, team leader, international policy expert and international stakeholder engagement expert. The meeting was dedicated to a round of introduction, discussion about the TOR and EBRD methodology, identifying all expert roles and upcoming tasks in the first 2-3 months of project implementation.

The second mobilization meeting held on the 3<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 was organized with the participation of the whole team, it included a round of introductions allowing team members to identify their international and local counterparts who will work most closely with them. Planning for the first 3 months of the implementation was discussed and technical leads on major deliverables identified.

During the meetings, the team brainstormed about how to keep everybody engaged and use time efficiently especially taking into consideration the sensitive situation regarding in-person meetings and travel due to the COVID19 pandemic. The following decisions were made:

- Regular Consultant team meetings to update and brief each other about the project progress and upcoming tasks will be held whenever necessary and at least monthly.
- The international team members will try to participate in meetings held by local team in person through zoom or other on-line stream meeting. Local team members must be able to connect international team on their mobile devices, we will make sure to ensure sufficient internet connection on local team mobile phones.
- All the team will provide visuals for both problems and solutions related to urban development to make discussions and stakeholder meetings more appealing and easier to conduct online.

The team agreed to use a shared Microsoft one-drive as a platform for sharing reports, documents and data. The local team is connected on a dedicated WhatsApp group on which our Russian speaking international project assistant and policy expert is also present and can follow developments.

### 2.2. Cooperation and communication with Almaty municipality

A first meeting was held with Almaty municipality representatives on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2020. Participants to the meeting included:

- Natalya Livinskaya, Head of Green Economy Department, Municipality of Almaty
- Chief Architect, Municipality of Almaty
- Maira Karassayeva, Operational Leader, Principal Banker for Green Economy Projects, EBRD
- Bakhtiyor Faiziev Senior Banker, Infrastructure Eurasia, City Lead for Almaty GCAP
- Reka Soos, Team Leader
- Gabriela Gavgas, Policy Expert and Project Assistant

During this meeting the EBRD Green Cities Programme was presented, the EBRD methodology for Green City Action Plan was briefly outlined and the institutional setup for cooperation between the Municipality and EBRD consultant team was discussed.

It was agreed that the following institutional arrangements will be made:

(1) Project focal point

- The Municipality nominated Nataliya Livinskaya, Head of Green Economy Department, as focal point to the project;
- Further, Mr. Ali Raimbaev was nominated as additional contact point as Mrs Livinskaya's busy schedule makes it difficult for the consultant team to be in frequent touch with her
- All official communication, such as data collection, list of question, request for document, submission of draft reports for review to and from the Municipality will be made through and coordinated by the Project focal point;
- The focal point will accept project reports/deliverables by email.

(2) Decision-makers/ political level support for GCAP

- The First Deputy Akim of Almaty – Kozhagapanov Yerlan Toktarkhanovich is overseeing the decision-making process related to GCAP development
- The consultant will brief Mr. Kozhagapanov Yerlan Toktarkhanovich and other decision-makers as required about the draft Baseline Section of the GCAP, Vision and Strategic Objectives and Actions Section of the GCAP.
- We will seek guidance from The First Deputy Akim regarding GCAP approval process and dissemination of the document with local councilors, facilitation of the political decision-making process.
- Nataliya Livinskaya, Head of Green Economy Department has a close and direct cooperation with the First Deputy Akim, being able to facilitate directly the communication with steering committee and decision-making level for the project.

(3) Working Group (WG)

- The municipality has nominated heads of departments from each relevant urban development department to be consulted during GCAP development as follows:

<b>Name &amp; Role in the project</b>	
1	Livinskaya Natalya Igorevna <b>Head of Green Economy Department</b>
2	Adilov Erlan Mamatovich <b>Head of Urban Mobility Department</b>
3	Akhmedzhanov Almaskhan Tlevkhanovich <b>Head of Urban Planning and Urbanism Department</b>
4	Seytenov Yerzhan Irgebaevich <b>Head of Housing Policy Department</b>
5	Samambetov Ardak Maulenovich <b>Head of land relations department</b>
6	Orazalin Erkebulan Nurlanovich <b>Head of Entrepreneurship and Investment Department</b>
7	Musaev Baurzhan Adilbekovich <b>Deputy Head of Energy Efficiency and Infrastructure Development Department</b>

- The WG members will actively share documents, information with the consultant team, will participate in technical meetings and will give feedback on draft deliverables
- WG members will give input into action formulation, suggesting specific project locations, guiding consultant on project scale, etc.
- Official requests for meetings, document sharing, and feedback will be through the focal point, but such official requests may be followed up by the technical project team directly with the technical representatives of the WG

- Though the communication department is not formally part of the WG, the consultant will seek to establish a working relationship with this department as the project entails intense communication with various stakeholders.
- The consultant should meet on a biweekly basis with the WG and decision-making level.

The first meeting between the members of the WG, EBRD representatives and consultant will be organized in the next period to discuss all outstanding issues.

## 2.3. Project Plan

A detailed plan with consideration of the formal requirements is provided in Annex 1 to this document. Due to availability of decision-makers and challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the inception phase was slightly delayed as compared to TOR.

**Table 1** Slight change of deadlines proposed in the detailed plan

#	Deliverable	According to TOR	According to Detailed Plan
		Weeks after start of the assignment	
1	Draft Inception Report	2	3
2	KOM and presentation	3	3
3	Launch Event organisation and presentation	As early as possible before 14	6
4	First Stakeholder Engagement Workshop	4 (or 2 weeks after completing #3)	6
5	Inception Report (Detailed Project Plan, SEP, Approval Process, etc.)	6	7

# 3. Consideration of Formal Requirements

## 3.1. GCAP Approval Process

The GCAP will follow all institutional steps for documents approval and will be subject of the decision of the City Council.

The final GCAP presentation in the Local Council is planned for the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. This date is to be discussed and confirmed with the decision makers. According to the Law on the Public Councils, the document will be publicly disclosed 10 days before the approval.

During project implementation, the content of the GCAP will be communicated to key stakeholders through planned stakeholder meetings. An initial stakeholder identification and analysis was conducted as part of this Inception report and is presented, in section 4.3. The following planned stakeholder consultation meetings are envisaged during project implementation:



- Second Stakeholder Engagement Workshop (mid-January 2021) – prioritization of challenges
- Third Stakeholder Engagement Workshop (mid-February 2021) – develop vision & Key strategic objectives for the City
- Fourth Stakeholder Engagement Workshop (mid-April 2021) – short list of actions and 5-10 mid-term targets linked with actions
- Final GCAP presentation in Local Council (early September 2021)

The consultation of specialized committees and their involvement in GCAP development will likely increase the chances of approval. The GCAP approval process will be further discussed in the upcoming period with the decision-making level at the Akimat .

### 3.2. SEA Requirements relevant to GCAP

The territorial development plans and programs are prepared at the following levels: state, region, district, city of republican status and are subject to the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and the Natural Resources (MEGNR) approval if:

- The plans are developed by the local authorities;
- The plans are developed for agriculture, water management, forestry, land use, fishing, energy production and the industries, including mining, oil refining, processing and chemicals production, construction, metallurgy, tourism and transport;
- The components to be implemented require environmental impact assessment (EIA) <sup>1,2</sup>, which practically includes all the development plans at the given levels.

However, no EIA or strategic EIA is required to be submitted with the plan. EIAs are required only for specific developments that may be associated with such plans.

## 4. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is a tool developed as part of the Green City Action Plan (GCAP) for the City of Almaty. Stakeholder engagement is a key element in building strong, constructive and responsive relationships which are essential for successfully managing the project's risks and impacts. Besides, the engagement activities will have an essential role in obtaining relevant information for the GCAP development.

SEP is a guiding document which outlines the main categories of stakeholders who will be continuously engaged within the development and implementation of the project. It will highlight the communication channels with the identified stakeholder groups who may be affected by or interested in the project. The present document outlines the stakeholder engagement principles and approach, the stakeholder analysis and their roles and responsibilities in the development of the GCAP.

### 4.1. General Principles and Approach

All interested parties will be involved in the engagement process starting at early phases of the process. The involvement of the stakeholders will be done using a stage approach in order to achieve the best results for the GCAP development.

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<sup>1</sup> The Environmental Code, 2021, Article 98 par. 5

<sup>2</sup> Clause 3 of the Order of the Minister of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan on approval of “the rules for the approval of plans and programs for the development of territories, strategic plans of local executive bodies of regions, cities of republican significance, the capital city, which are subject to their following approval with the environmental protection authorized body” 27.03.2012 No.78-p.



All interested parties have the right to be informed on the project implementation, methodology and the obtained results.

The information will be provided continuously, during all project phases, in an accessible and timely manner, considering the stakeholders' needs. A series of information materials will be developed for the purposes of the project. The City will have a dedicated platform/page on their website where the project progress will be presented regularly. The key stakeholders will be invited to workshops and other relevant events. In case COVID - 19 pandemic restrictions will make participation at events impossible, online meetings and webinars will be organized, and all interested parties will be invited to these meetings.

For the following project phases, SEP will stand as a separate document since it is a living document and will be reviewed and updated as needed. Any updates and/or revisions will be disclosed to the City and other relevant key stakeholders.

## 4.2. Key regulatory requirements for stakeholder engagement

### 4.2.1. National and Local Requirements.

There are no legislative requirements to disclose the GCAP because the plan is a recommendation to the City Council to be used in amendment of the city development strategy and the budget. Both the strategy and the budget are subject to the public disclosure and consultation. The Almaty City Public Council <sup>3</sup> is to be the leading party in organizing such public hearings<sup>4</sup>. The Public Council meetings are valued legitimate if a public notice is placed in the mass media 30 days in advance and the place and time of the meeting is disclosed and a city council representative is formally invited 10 days before. The City Council has to respond to the Public Council recommendations on the city development plans within 10 days.

The plan also does not fall under the requirements for stakeholder engagement<sup>5</sup> because the plan implementation is not expected to generate negative impact.

The Minister of Environmental Protection rule on approval of the development plans<sup>6</sup> does not apply either. Please see section 3.2, above.

Even if there are no legal requirements, the Akimat is committed to engage and has traditionally actively engaged key stakeholders whenever developing a new plan or preparing an investment plan.

### 4.2.2. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Requirements

According to the EBRD, stakeholder engagement is important for building strong, constructive and responsive relationships with all interested and impacted persons/institutions. EBRD's Performance Requirement 10 (PR10) states that national laws and regulations regarding public information disclosure and consultation must always be considered when developing and implementing a project. Besides, EBRD's Performance Requirement 8 (PR8) states that consultation with stakeholders and affected communities should be made in the context of cultural heritage issues.

If national laws are insufficient or there are significant discrepancies between national and PR 10 provisions, then the following principles should be considered:

- Promoting transparent communication between the project promoter, its workforce, the local communities directly affected by the project, and other interested stakeholders;
- The involvement of the stakeholders has to be free of manipulation, interference, coercion and intimidation;
- The involvement of the stakeholders has to be adapted on the basis of the project impacts over them (direct/indirect) and their level of influence and interest towards the project. Vulnerable groups will be identified and specific actions will be undertaken to ensure that the Project will not contribute to the

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<sup>3</sup> Law on the Public Councils, 2015 and [Regulations on the Public Council of Almaty City](#), 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Typical requirements to the order of organizing and conducting public hearings. #1191, 2015, Government of RoK for support of par.3 A.21 of the Law on the Public Council 2015

<sup>5</sup> The Rules on conducting public hearings 2007 and the Ministry of Energy Order of approval of the List of the types of the proposed activities, which are subject to the public hearings. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Rules for the approval of territorial development plans and programs..." Minister of Environmental Protection Order No.78-p, 2012

- existing vulnerabilities and possible barriers to their participation in the engagement process are eliminated;
- The involvement of stakeholders must take place in the early stages of the project, and continue throughout the entire life of the project (PR10 requirement); and
  - Ensure access to an appropriate and fair complaints management mechanism for stakeholders to submit their questions, concerns or grievances about the project.
  - In line with EBRD's Performance Requirement 1 (PR1), together with PR10, engagement with the project stakeholders is an integral part of the project environmental and social impacts assessment, management and monitoring processes. PR1 requires the identification of the project's stakeholders and the design of a plan for engaging with the stakeholders in a meaningful manner to take their views and concerns into consideration in planning, implementing and operating the project.

EBRD has recently published a Guide for Stakeholder Engagement in Green City Action Plans, which will be followed in SEP development.

### 4.3. Stakeholder identification and analysis

As defined in the Guide for Stakeholder Engagement in Green City Action Plans, stakeholders are persons, groups and/or organizations who:

- are directly and/or indirectly affected by the GCAP development and outcomes,
- have interests in the GCAP development and outcomes, and
- have the potential to influence GCAP development and outcomes or City operations.

The stakeholders' analysis methodology includes a simple and straightforward approach. First, a list of stakeholders is developed, including those directly involved in the project or interested in the project and its outcomes and impacts. Second, the stakeholders are arranged in groups of interests and a role will be assigned to each group in order to have a clear understanding on when and how each stakeholder group will be involved.

In the preliminary phase, we have identified 4 groups of relevant stakeholders for the project purposes:

#### **Group 1. Specialized Committee(s) of the City Council**

The Specialized Committee(s) of the City Council will have a decisional role and will be involved in the approval process. The representatives of the Local Council will be invited to the official events and will receive regular updates on the progress of the project.

#### **Group 2. Project Working Group and decision-making level involvement**

The project will be overseen at the decision-making level by the First Deputy Mayor of the Municipality. in charge of the smooth project implementation and cooperation with the Municipality. When needed, the First Deputy Mayor (or someone delegated on his behalf) will provide support in the implementation of project activities and will participate at the official events and technical meetings. The First Deputy Mayor will be in charge of initiating and coordinating the approval process of the GCAP.

The Working Group will have a technical role. The representatives of the relevant departments within the municipality participate in the group and they will facilitate access to representatives of relevant utility companies and other Municipal departments as needed.

The working group will have an active role in all project phases. At least once per month, a technical meeting will be organized. Each department will provide information with regard to the relevant sector and measures that were already taken to reduce the negative impact or to improve the living condition in the city. The working group will provide feedback on reports and any other documents developed for the project purposes, will participate at all 4 Stakeholders engagement workshops and at the 3 one-day training sessions.

#### **Group 3. Other key stakeholders**

This group consists of relevant regulators/agencies within the City, IFI and donors, representatives of similar projects, relevant NGOs, research institutes, businesses in the sector and mass-media. It will have a consultative role in all project phases and will participate at official events (Launch Event and 4 Stakeholders Engagement Workshops) in order to provide feedback and input on identified challenges, strategic objectives and proposed actions. This group will be informed about the progress of the project, methodology and results obtained.

#### **Group 4. Public at large**

The public will also have a consultative role in the process and will be engaged in all project phases in order to provide feedback on identified challenges, strategic objectives and proposed actions.

The preliminary list of stakeholders (being also a tentative list of participants to the KoM, Launch Event and 1<sup>st</sup> Stakeholder Engagement Workshop) includes representatives of departments within the Municipality, representatives of municipal enterprises, representatives of civil society - non-governmental organizations, public, etc. - representatives of business and academia. The preliminary list is included in Annex 2.

## **4.4. General approach on communication**

This section presents the proposed communication means with the 4 identified groups and the content of communication.

**Table 2** Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement Plan and proposed communication channels

<b>STAKEHOLDER GROUP</b>	<b>ROLE</b>	<b>ENGAGEMENT IN PROJECT STAGES</b>	<b>CONTENT OF COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION CHANNELS</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT</b>
<b>Group 1. Specialized Committee of the Council</b> ➤ Representatives of each political party	Decisional	Participation at official events - Launch event (1)/Stakeholder Engagement Workshops (4)  Anytime a decision needs to be taken	Draft sections of the GCAP  Presentations and information materials  Information about the project progress	Official letters/emails/notifications  Online/direct meetings	To decide upon the project results  Involved in the approval process
<b>Group 2. Project Working Group and the decision-making level</b> ➤ Mayor ➤ First Deputy Mayor ➤ Relevant departments within the municipalities for the 7 sectors ➤ Public utility	Technical	Participation at official events - Launch event (1)/Stakeholder Engagement Workshops (4)  Regular meetings of the working- group (once per month)	Working documents  Templates and tools  Draft sections of the GCAP	Official letters/emails/notifications  Online/direct working meetings  Mobile phone  Workshops	To provide information with regard to the relevant sector  To provide feedback on reports and any other documents developed for the project purposes  To collect views on the current situation of the

companies offering services, implementing investments, or ensuring maintenance					<p>environmental quality</p> <p>To discuss the identified challenges/priority areas</p> <p>To develop the vision and strategic objectives of the City</p> <p>To develop the short list of actions</p>
<p><b>Group 3. Other key stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Regulators / Agencies (Environmental Authority, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)</li> <li>➤ IFIs and donors (EBRD, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Representatives of similar projects</li> <li>➤ Relevant NGOs</li> <li>➤ Research Institutes</li> <li>➤ Businesses in the sector (big private industrial /energy/waste/etc. companies)</li> <li>➤ Mass-media</li> </ul>	Consultative	<p>Participation at official events - Launch event (1)/Stakeholder Engagement Workshops (4)</p> <p>All project phases</p>	<p>Official documentation for approval processes</p> <p>Official documentation for disclosure</p> <p>Draft sections of GCAP</p> <p>Presentations and information materials</p>	<p>Official letters/emails/notifications</p> <p>Dedicated platform/website</p> <p>Press releases and social media coverage</p> <p>Grievance mechanism system</p>	<p>To collect views on the current situation of the environmental quality</p> <p>To discuss the identified challenges/priority areas</p> <p>To develop the vision and strategic objectives of the City</p> <p>To develop the short list of actions</p>
<b>Group 4. Public at large</b>	Consultative	All project phases	Presentations and information materials	<p>Notifications</p> <p>Dedicated platform/website</p> <p>Press releases and social media coverage</p> <p>Grievance mechanism system</p>	<p>To collect feedback on identified challenges, strategic objectives, and proposed actions</p>

In light of COVID-19, special attention will be given to the communication with stakeholders' groups. In this regard, face to face meetings will be reduced as much as possible and project meetings/site visits will be carried out online, via different online platforms or by phone until further notice and positive changes

regarding the control of the pandemic. In case physical meetings/site-visits will still be needed, EBRD will be notified in advance and a COVID-19 protocol, including a travel risk assessment, will be followed. Because the coronavirus situation is constantly evolving, the protocol will be updated prior to each meeting/site visit to include additional measures, in case necessary. In this respect, an evaluation of the COVID situation will be performed prior to any meeting or site visit.

Preferably, the project's deliverables such as documents, official letters, notifications, etc. will be disclosed via e-mails, websites, and online platforms.

All the above measures will be discussed and agreed with the Working Group nominated by the Akimat. Additionally, the consultant requested a separate meeting from the Communication Department to discuss these issues in detail.

## 5. Project risks and mitigation strategies

Overall, the risks related to GCAP development are medium to low as statistical data availability is good, capacity of municipality is assessed to be relatively good as compared to other municipalities in the region. However still some risks need to be flagged at this stage, a summary of these and related mitigation measures are included in the table below.

**Table 3** Risks and mitigation measures

Risk	Mitigation measures
Political changes may influence the decision-making process and approval process of the GCAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Municipality confirmed that technical level staff working on urban development is stable in the municipality. The consultant team will make efforts to thoroughly consult the technical level staff regarding the GCAP and get their buy-in. In this way the technical staff can promote and support internally the GCAP process with any new decision-makers that may be involved due to political changes.</li></ul>
Active and critical NGO community may cause delays in GCAP development and approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stakeholder Engagement Process takes into account a particularly vibrant NGO community in Almaty, proposing disclosure and engagement actions dedicated to this group. These actions are specified in Table 2, Section 4.4.</li></ul>
Several parallel planning processes are on-going, GCAP may be perceived as redundant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In all communication to municipality and stakeholders the consultant will reiterate that GCAP is building on existing documents and cooperates with planning processing, rather than duplicating these</li><li>• GCAP methodology is designed to take into account and work with current responses of the municipality, it is an exercise to prioritize challenges and actions.</li><li>• The consultant will make an inventory of the existing responses and will identify any gaps in the response or ways to enable and enhance these.</li><li>• The consultant will sieve through plans and identify those officially approved and actively used by the municipality to prioritize analysing these when developing the GCAP</li></ul>

High turnover of staff, low capacity and insufficient coordination between municipal departments may reduce the sense of ownership on the part of the municipality and reduce efficiency of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and attracting champions within the Municipality for embedding the GCAP process and implementation in the different departments of the Municipality.</li> <li>Working with technical staff from key departments who are likely to stay longer in the institution and not leave based on political agendas;</li> <li>Initiate frequent working meetings and a close cooperation with the Municipality to increase ownership.</li> </ul>
Limited engagement from municipal decision-makers and technical staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The issue has been flagged and the Municipality added a support person to the appointed focal point, Mr. Ali Raimbaev, working as a member of the Green Economy department of the Municipality available to cooperate with the consultant team</li> <li>The working group has been set up. We will raise the issue of a need for active engagement during the first meeting with the working group and following that we expect more engagement from decision-makers and technical staff of the municipality.</li> </ul>
Translation of documents in both Russian and Kazakh may delay feedback process and approval of deliverables, it also puts a strain on the budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The consultant suggests all feedback cycles to be carried out in Russian and that approval of documents from the city may also be done on the Russian version. This way only final documents will be translated into Kazakh to be submitted to the local council.</li> </ul>
Regulations related to social distancing and travel restrictions due to COVID19 pandemic may impact level of engagement and cooperation throughout this process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The draft SEP is developed as a part of this report and will be continuously updated as our understanding of the communication and engagement needs of the team members, client, beneficiary and stakeholders evolves during project implementation</li> <li>The draft SEP takes into account the special circumstances arising from the COVID19 pandemic (See section 4.4 of this report).</li> <li>The monthly Consultant team meetings will always have on the agenda a brief brainstorm about what we can do better to deepen our understanding of the city and engage with each other and stakeholders for a better outcome of the project under the special COVID19 situation. The results of this brainstorming will be incorporated into the SEP.</li> </ul>

## 6. Summary of Kick-off Meeting, Launch Event and First Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

### Event date/time

The online event took place on 9th of September 2020. The entire event lasted 2h30min in accordance with the proposed agenda.

### Structure of the event

The event was divided in two parts. The first session was dedicated for welcoming remarks, the Green Cities Video, a presentation of the Almaty context held by Ms. Natalya Livinskaya, Head of Green Economy Department within the Municipality of Almaty and for a presentation on GCAP methodology and best practice examples. The second session took the form of a webinar where all attendees had the opportunity to address their main concerns and to provide their views of the current situation of the environmental quality, urban planning and infrastructure development of the City

### Attendees<sup>7</sup>

The meeting brought together more than 50 participants, representatives from municipal technical departments, EBRD and key stakeholders to discuss the overall approach of the Green Cities Programme.

The panelists are listed below:

- Maira Karassayeva (MK) - Operational Leader and Principal Banker for green economy projects, EBRD
- Bakhtiyor Faiziev (BF) - Senior Banker, Infrastructure Eurasia, City Lead for Almaty GCAP
- Agris Preimanis (AP) - EBRD Director and Head of Kazakhstan
- Hiroyuki Ito (Ito Hiroyuki) (HI) - GCAP Manager, EBRD
- Nurzhan Sakhariyev (NS) - Analyst, EBRD
- Natalia Livinskaya (NL) - Head of Green Economy Department within the Municipality of Almaty
- Vladimir Merkuryev (VM) – Environment Expert, Director at EcoSocio Analysts LLC and Moderator of the meeting
- Nargiza Ospanova (NO) – Local coordinator
- Mark Keppens (MK) – Urban Transport Expert
- Reka Soos (RS) – Team leader of the GCAP project in Almaty
- Aliya Abakanova (AA) - Interpreter

The following key stakeholders have also attended the event: ECO Almaty, IGTIPC, Ecounion "Tabigat", ADB, AlmatyGenPlan, Almaty Development Center, Green Salvation, Tengri Partners Investment Banking, Knowledge Srl, Qazaq Recycling, Research Institute Almatygirogor-1, Almaty Heating Network, Almaty Power Stations, Samruk Energy, Austrian Embassy, AirVision.kz, KWR, Environmental and social specialists, Akimat - Almaty Department of Ecology, Alatau Zharyk Company, Velo-friends, , Transport Institute, ECOJER, KazWaste

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<sup>7</sup> The Attendee Report can be found in Annex 3



## Notes from the event

### SESSION 1

- Maira Karassayeva (MK), Operational Leader and Principal Banker for green economy projects, EBRD, has opened the event with welcoming remarks and presented Vladimir Merkuryev (VM), Director at EcoSocio Analysts LLC and the Consultant's local representative
- VM has made some housekeeping announcements regarding the structure of the meeting, how Q&A can be issued/submitted, the access to simultaneous translation
- MK has presented the Program - developed to provide support to the cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, to deal with environmental issues and to build solutions to address these issues. The program has 43 participation cities from EBRD COO, Almaty being the 36<sup>th</sup>. The work on this project commenced on August 5<sup>th</sup>. The aim of this First official meeting is to announce the work that will be handled out by the Akimat together with EBRD and the Consultant.
- MK Introduced EBRD team: Mr Agris Preimanis (AP), EBRD Director and Head of Kazakhstan, Mr. Bakhtiyor Faiziev (BF) – Senior Banker, Infrastructure Eurasia, City Lead for Almaty GCAP, Mr. Hiroyuki Ito – GCAP Manager, EBRD and Mr. Nurzhan Sakhariyev – Analyst, EBRD
- AP took the floor for the opening remarks and specified that this Green City Action Plan (GCAP) is a very important topic for the city in identifying sustainable municipal infrastructure projects that will improve environmental situation of the city of Almaty. He also mentioned that EBRD is already actively engaged with the Akimat and in the last 10 years they have developed together projects in transport, infrastructure and other sectors. He pointed out that the Almaty public is very active in providing good advice and raising very good issues and all the ideas will be used in developing the Plan
- The audience had the opportunity to view the Green Cities video and, afterwards, MK introduced Ms. Natalya Livinskaya (NL), Head of Green Economy Department within the Municipality of Almaty
- NL thanked EBRD and government of Austria for supporting City of Almaty and presented the current measures/actions and projects developed by the Akimat to improve the environmental situation in Almaty. She has highlighted the 4 main polluters in the city. She mentioned that during the lockdown the air pollution has decreased but now the indicators are increasing again. Main activities currently implemented by the Akimat: the Bakad road, the Metro, modernization of the power plant to use gas, gasification for private sector. She has presented the measures currently envisaged for Almaty city: development of infrastructure, transport, road modernization, trolley bus modernization and specified that, recently, a resolution was published with respect to the bus fleet: it will not be purchased or procured if it is using diesel and all the existing vehicles that are using diesel will be modernized or sold out in order to be replaced with more environmental friendly vehicles. She has talked about a Green Fund project for improving the biodiversity in the city - planting of over 1 mil trees in the next years – the projection for 2020 – planting of 256 000 trees. Beside the practical examples, NL has also mentioned that there are ongoing actions for improving the legislation: this year was finalized the tree planting regulations. She mentioned that the City Action Plan includes more than 300 actions – divided on short/mid/long term, including measures to improve the city environment by decreasing traffic in the city: increase of the bus lanes, bicycles routes, development of infrastructure; measures to reduce air, water and soil pollution: installation of additional sensors on the existing stationary monitoring posts and also installing mobile posts for measuring the air, water and soil quality
- Reka Soos (RS), Team Leader of the GCAP Project, has introduced the Consultant Team and described the GCAP methodology, process and timeline and the roles of all stakeholders in developing the GCAP. She highlighted the typical planning of the project and detailed the steps of the development of the plan: two basic elements can be noticed – baseline and action plan - in both phases the Consultant will go through a technical consultation, stakeholder consultation and a political consultation in order to be sure that the data/ideas are technically correct.
- Mark Keppens (MKe), Urban Transport Expert presented some best practice examples on air pollution, transport, water and wastewater management, soil remediation climate change, housing.
- RS has added some examples on best practices on energy and waste management

## SESSION 2

- RS highlighted the importance to have the participants in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the meeting and introduced some topics to understand the challenges in urban development sector in the city in order to be able to start the indicators database – especially the pressure indicators in the 7 sectors of the GCAP: transport, buildings, water and wastewater, solid waste, energy, industry and land use. She mentioned that, for each urban development sector a clear understanding of the challenges and environmental pollution caused by the challenges and the ongoing actions in that sector will be needed.
- RS, MKe and VM held a presentation on the main challenges identified so far in the 7 sectors of the GCAP
- After the presentation of the Consultant Team, the Q&A session has started. All participants had the opportunity to raise questions and to be actively engaged in the discussions. The questions raised by the participants together with the answers provided by EBRD, the Consultant and the Akimat are listed below:

### ***Q 1: How will the project analyse the problems regulated at national level?***

- MK answered that this project will offer both policy related and environmental measures. Policy related measures are required to handle identified environmental problems of high priority. The Akimat/authorities will have the final solutions to these measures. The consultant team has engaged a Legal Expert, Raushana Chaltabayeva, who will handle the legal aspects and political measures on whether amendments to legislation will be needed or not.
- BF further explained that in all project components consultations/public hearings, local council, budget organization, national experts, etc. will be organized. The feasibility of each suggestion in terms of legislation will be analyzed. When the Plan is approved there should be a clear understanding on how it will be implemented. The suggested measures will be realistic, implementable, and clear and everything will be linked to the institutional framework.

### ***Q 2: How will the discussions be organized by sector?***

- RS answered that the largest consultations will be organized for the entire urban sector. However, in a live setting the participants will be split into working groups or by topics. In the first instance the meetings will be probably held online, with breaks. At the end everything will be briefed in a plenary session. The aim of these meetings is to move towards with integrated, multifunctional and multisector solutions.

### ***Q 3: Will the project estimate the cost of implementation of different measures by sector and based on what sources of information and approaches?***

- MK mentioned that the goal of the Action Plan is to identify investments required to solve environmental problems, to strengthen the climate resistance and mitigation measures in Almaty. As an example, in Ulaanbaatar, the proposed investment is about approx. 700 million USD for all sectors. The approach will be similar for the City of Almaty. EBRD, as a financing institution, would like to finance some of the proposed projects and has to understand how much these will cost and what kind of financing sources might be used
- RS added that at the level of the GCAP a benchmark-based costing will be performed by using the available data (i.e. cost units) of prior projects developed in the City of Almaty and from other international similar projects. The plan is at prefeasibility level. The operation costs and the impact on the budget will be estimated within this study. Also, we will see if the budget can carry out this project. The costs and benefits will be looked in detail in order to be able to justify the spending of most important projects of the city.
- BF also mentioned that in this project we are looking at costs, funding and governance. The consultant will identify investments required for all the subsectors.

**Q 4: Who will be approving/accepting the recommendation and findings of the project? Are NGOs going to be involved? Are they going to have a consultative role in the project, or will they be authorized to have a role in the approval and outputs of the plan?**

- MK explained that the plan will be developed by the Akimat, the Consultant, NGOs and other public stakeholders of the city. 4 workshops with interested stakeholders are planned during the GCAP development. The help of the public is very important especially in verifying figures, indicators which are the basis of the plan. Also, the public will have the role providing data and finding solutions. Some of the findings will be delivered to the Akimat and the Akimat will be the actual decision maker for these.

**Q 5: How does the project relates with ADB's low carbon city development project in Almaty?**

- MK indicated that the GCAP is addressing the sustainable development issue and ADB is connected to low carbon development. Projects are similar but the city administration has decided to go with EBRD in the Green Cities program.

**Q 6: For information – we are currently adjusting the Master Plan for the City of Almaty scheduled to be finalized by the end of the year and the environmental issues raised today will be also touched in detailed in this Plan. In parallel we are working on Green construction and Green Economy projects referring to urban development regulations. How will the project be correlated with the Masterplan? Is the cooperation with the working groups of this projects envisaged in developing the GCAP? If so, how the meetings will be organized?**

- MK answered that, as a rule, the GCAP is developed in close cooperation with city developers. It is expected that the Akimat will provide us a clear understanding of the on-going parallel projects and all these will be considered in the development of the GCAP.

**Q 7: How will EBRD experts assess the city's transportation problems in Almaty? Any suggestions to address these issues?**

- MK explained that the GCAP will not overlap with the Master Plan. The transportation system will be developed and that the GCAP is focused on environmental issues connected with climate challenges and on how the transportation system will affect the environment and sustainability in terms of climate change. It is not about procuring a new transport system. The document will be developed based on the existing documents, existing development funds in the city but focusing more on environmental challenges.

**Q 8: How many environmental sensors for measuring the air quality are foreseen and where these will be installed? Will this part be considered in the Action Plan – in terms on the increase of the monitoring points?**

- NL answered that the Akimat will consider this in their work. Together with EBRD, the Akimat has already developed some studies. Currently, sensors are low quality but there are some several investors ready to procure more high-quality sensors. The Akimat is currently negotiating on how to cover the city with high-quality sensors.

**Q 9: What is the planning horizon for this Plan?**

- RS answered that overall planning period span is 15 years but the GCAP will prioritize and detail out short-term actions for the next 5 years

**Q 10: What kind of digital solutions/platforms will be included in the Plan?**

- RS answers that we are currently learning how to digitalize the communication. During the GCAP development a special attention will be given on smart city aspects - digital data collection and using

this data to optimize services. The digitalization will be a cross-cutting issue in this project. A Smart city/Digital expert is part of the team. The expert will be looking at each action and will provide solutions on how digital aspects such as apps, smart bins on waste, etc. can be included in the projects.

**Just a comment:** The city's problems are already clear and obvious. The new Plan should carry the consolidated decisions of both the EBRD team and other NGOs and international partner institutions.

### **Press and social media coverage of the event**

A dedicated section for the GCAP was created on the Akimat's website, within the Green Economy Department webpage. The event notification was published on this page:

<http://www.almatyeco.gov.kz/ru/plan-deyatelnosti-zelenyj-gorod/plan-dejstvij-zelenyj-gorod-dlya-goroda-almaty>

The Event notification together with the notification published on Akimat's website, the Agenda of the event and the Attendees Report can be found in Annex 3.

## Annex 1 - Preliminary Project Plan

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## Almaty Green City Action Plan

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