

**Minutes of the Virtual Local Project Appraisal Committee Review
UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, RBEC**

Project: “Stakeholder Engagement for Uranium Legacy Remediation in Central Asia (Phase III)”

Dates of review: 4-11 December 2024

1. Participants

Name	Title
Alexandra Solovieva	Resident Representative, UNDP Kyrgyzstan
Akiko Fujii	Resident Representative, UNDP Uzbekistan
Robert Bernardo	Team Leader, Governance and Peacebuilding Team, UNDP IRH
Corneliu Eftodi	Team Leader, Gender Team, UNDP IRH
Irena Cerovic	Team Leader, Innovation, UNDP IRH
Laura Altinger	Team Leader, Nature, Climate and Energy, UNDP IRH
Oana Maria Rebedea	Team Leader, Partnerships, UNDP IRH
Vesna Dzuteska-Bisheva	Team Leader, Inclusive Growth Team
Suren Poghosyan	Team Leader, Sustainable Finance
Tina Stoum	Regional Programme Chief
Vitalie Vremis	Chief, Country Office Support
Farid Garakhanov	Operations Manager
Sayed Omer Sadaat	Regional Communications Analyst

2. Background information on the project:

Total estimated project budget: US \$ 2,368,098

Project timeframe:

The project starting date and duration: 10 December 2024 for the duration of two years.

Central Asia; the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. *(Note: Tajikistan component will be led by OSCE.)*

Project implementation modality: DIM

3. Review of the Project: “Enhancing Urban Resilience to Disaster Risk and Climate Change in Central Asia”

The uranium legacy presents a significant threat to livelihoods, human health, and the environment in Central Asia. Rough estimates indicate that approximately 1 billion tons of waste from the mining and processing of radioactive ores are stored on tailing sites throughout the region. This vast accumulation is primarily attributed to the Soviet Union, where Central Asia functioned as the primary uranium supplier to its nuclear industry for nearly four decades. Numerous assessments conducted on the radioactive risk in the region reveal that many high-risk legacy sites lack adequate security measures. The structures containing the waste are often insufficient and prone to damage, while a deficiency in technical expertise and maintenance further exacerbates the situation. These uranium legacy sites pose severe risks to both the environment and public health, encompassing physical, radiological, and toxicological hazards for individuals and animals residing near these sites.

Stakeholder Engagement for Uranium Legacy Remediation in Central Asia (Phase III) will be implemented in partnership with OSCE, building on the results of Phase II. The objective of the Phase III is to reduce the risk of negative impacts resulting from uranium waste on people, livelihoods, and the environment by raising awareness and supporting people-centric, gender-sensitive, and risk-informed solutions in uranium legacy sites at the local community level in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Implementation of Phase III will be divided between UNDP and OSCE for the relevant components of the project, as outlined below:

- **OSCE** will be responsible for the implementation of the Project Output (EU Outcome) 1: Engagement, capacity building and awareness raising of local stakeholders in the three beneficiary countries for ULSs remediation. Regional cooperation for uranium legacy sites remediation promoted.

Responsible Party: OSCE, in cooperation with Aarhus Centres, relevant state and international partners and in coordination with UNDP.

- **UNDP** will be responsible for the Project Output (EU Outcome) 2: Improved socio-economic conditions in target communities driven by local participatory planning, tailored gender-sensitive solutions, business development, and strengthened regional cooperation.

Responsible party: UNDP IRH, UNDP COs in Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

4. Summary of virtual LPAC member comments

Prior to the LPAC, all implementing COs and participating countries were duly consulted with inputs incorporated into the final project document, including those from the IRH Quality Assurance Team. The Prodoc had also been cleared by the donor, the European Commission. Comments from LPAC member were received during the period from 4 December 2024 to 11 December 2024. A detailed comments log is annexed to this document. The project is fully supported by LPAC members. The thematic focus and proposed activities are relevant and aligned with national and country offices' priorities.

5. Final LPAC recommendation:

LPAC recommends approving the project. The project design is of sufficient quality to move to the implementation stage. The list of changes incorporated in the project document is attached to the Minutes.

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Cleared by: Rayza Oblitas, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Specialist, UNDP IRH/RBEC

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Approved by: Tina S. Stoum, Regional Programme Chief, UNDP IRH/RBEC

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Annex 1. Comments Log during LPAC Review of the Project “Stakeholder Engagement for Uranium Legacy Remediation in Central Asia (Phase III)”

UNDP CO/IRH/HQ	Comments from the LPAC members	Response to the comment by:
Tina Stoum, Regional Programme Chief	- Align with RBEC Just Transition Strategic Framework: Propose aligning the initiative with the draft RBEC Just Transition Strategic Framework to enable learning and potential scaling based on just transition principles including care economy. - Utilize Regional Resources: Explore leveraging guides, toolkits, and resources from the region’s urban/local transformation portfolios, including those on community listening practices. - Peer-to-Peer Learning and Community-Led Approaches: Consider applying a peer-to-peer exchange model with a community-led approach, drawing lessons from programs like the NetZeroCities Twinning Programme. - Youth and Intergenerational Equity: As youth and intergenerational equity gain focus in the region, consider exploring ways to connect initiatives like the 'Green Patrols' with the RBEC Generation Nexus Youth Platform. - Nature-Based Solutions: Consider strengthening the implementation of nature-based solutions, such as small-scale safety measures at ULS sites.	- Comments on the Just Transition Strategic Framework are well noted. Under Component 2, the project will apply the principles of the Framework and involve the entire project team to bring the socio-economic pilot projects closer to the just transition principles. - Comments on utilizing regional resources are well noted. The project team will make use of the regional guides, toolkits, and resources for the implementation. Country office coordinators will engage with the relevant teams at the regional hub to share experiences and explore ways to apply these resources in Phase 3. - Comments on peer learning and community-led approaches are well noted. The project team recognizes the value of such models and will explore integrating elements from successful programs. This will be considered as a potential approach to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and community empowerment throughout the project. - Comments on youth and intergenerational equity are well noted. Youth is a critical element of the project across all components. The project will involve the project team to further establish linkages with the RBEC Generation Nexus Youth Platform and ‘Green Patrol’ groups, ensuring that youth are actively engaged and contribute to sustainable solutions within the project. - Recommendation to strengthen the NbS are well noted. The project will apply NbS lens while selecting green community solutions aiming to reduce ULS risks to people’s health and

UNDP CO/IRH/HQ	Comments from the LPAC members	Response to the comment by:
	• Sustainability and Outreach in Museum Concept: Evaluate the sustainability and outreach impact of a physical museum for advocacy and awareness.	the environment, while also enhancing livelihoods in project areas, under the component led by UNDP (Component 2). For the low-value grants under Outcome 2, the project team will deploy similar arrangements as applied in previous phases of the project. The approximate range of the grants per pilot will be proposed to remain the same (i.e. in the range of USD 10,000-15,000). The target groups and beneficiaries of these low-value grants will be proposed to be those living in areas impacted by uranium tailings. The selection of projects/pilots will be based on criteria, which will be developed and finalised during the implementation phase. The criteria, under certain parameters, will also include nature-based solutions. • Suggestion to evaluate the sustainability and outreach impact of the museum is well noted. The museum established within the Phase 2 has proven to be a useful concept, providing a platform for open discussions on radiation safety and tailings reclamation, engaging students, and tourists from different countries. Within the Phase 3, the project team will consider factors such as long-term sustainability, accessibility, and its capacity to engage and raise awareness among diverse audiences.