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ENVSEC-IES Workshop on Environmental Security Assessments: Methodologies and Practices Session 3: Lessons Learned from ESA Case Studies

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Recognizing that environmental problems do not stop at national borders, the ENVSEC Initiative has developed a platform that turns the potential for conflict between states into opportunities for confidence-building and co-operation. In close co-ordination with national governments, **ENVSEC has conducted environment and security assessments in the regions of Central Asia, South-Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, and Eastern Europe.** Following these in-depth assessments, ENVSEC partner organizations have developed work programmes to address priority environment and security issues and encourage transboundary environmental co-operation.

I will first talk about the ENVSEC assessment methodology, then give you some feedback on its impact, based on a number of evaluation reports which have been conducted over the past years (CIDA 2006, UNDP 2008, Finland 2010).

1. ENVSEC Assessment Methodology:

As mentioned, assessments were conducted in four regions: EE, SEE, SC and CA.

The approach relies on a factual depiction of “hot spots” that can positively or negatively affect the connection between environment and security in a region or state, raising awareness on these issues.

Formal process:

- To ensure ownership of its projects, the Initiative typically starts its assessment by **holding meetings with the concerned ministries in countries of the region**;
- The process then begins with a **desk study** undertaken by environment and security experts;
- As this occurs, **contracts are set up with local experts** to draft the country's input. Once developed, the latter is **reviewed by a host of country experts—usually local or regional consultants**—to ensure soundness of content, and commitment toward the process. ENVSEC NFPs **within the country's MFA and MoE assist in the selection of these experts**, who come from a wide range of sectors;
- The results of this assessment are then verified and discussed in **national consultations** that involve delegates from key institutions, governments, and the civil society; such consultations ensure **that stakeholders agree on the environmental issues that require action**, since participants are left to identify top-priority threats and opportunities for their country;
- This forum eventually leads to a **mapping exercise that provides a suitable framework for defining project priorities**, in close collaboration with governments. Ultimately the process results in the development of a regional priority paper, followed by a regional work program;
- The whole process is being carried out in close so-operation with civil society and the governments of the region, which ensures ownership and **actually contributes to awareness-raising**

2. Is it working?

ENVSEC underwent a number of evaluations:

- **An Evaluation commissioned by CIDA in 2006 found that:**

“while its scientific base rests on previous reports published for the relevant countries or regions, the process has the unique advantage of allowing local policy makers and stakeholders to acknowledge, and agree upon, perceived environment and security issues.”

“the maps developed as part of the process are universally considered, by far, as primary communication tools that raise the profile of the Initiative with policy makers in the targeted countries and on the international scene, as well as with donors. These maps have been referred to, and publicised, in numerous global publications”.

- **An Assessment focusing on ENVSEC in Central Asia was commissioned by UNDP in 2008 found that the sub-regional assessments on the Ferghana Valley and the Eastern Caspian Region as well as the pending Amu Darya Assessment were all of high quality. On the Ferghana Valley the Report specifically commented:**

“This report is recognized worldwide as a high quality comprehensive assessment, which for the first time, bring new knowledge and catalyze interest in previously unknown or not popular topic such as the Mailusuu site that is considered in the top 30 list of global pollution hotspots, the Hudjand site that is almost unknown outside of the region, although it contains 10 times more nuclear waste than Mailusuu and it is located only a few kilometres away from the second largest city in Tajikistan; and other sites such as the Kanibadam dump, Haidarkan mercury site and the problem of natural disasters in the Batken region.”

- **A recent assessment commissioned by Finland of selected ENVSEC projects in three regions** (Wildfire Risk Reduction in the SC (OSCE), Dam Safety in Transboundary cooperation and the Dniester river basin (OSCE) and Capacity Building for Co-operation on Dam Safety in Central Asia (UNECE) lauded the relevance of the environment and security challenges tackled.

“The evaluation concludes that the assessed ENVSEC projects are relevant and reasonably effective... According to the evaluators, these ENVSEC project activities address relevant environmental issues in the target countries, also from the point of view of environment and security inter-linkages, and that the ENVSEC projects are contributing to the reduction of environment and security risks.”