

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) and the UN Development Account Project

“Enhancing Sustainable Public Procurement for the Regional Transition to an Inclusive Green Economy in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia”

Introductory Information on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP)

Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, December 9, 2020

REPORT

On December 9, 2020, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), within the framework of the UN Development Account project “*Enhancing Sustainable Public Procurement for the Regional Transition to an Inclusive Green Economy in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia*” (UNDA SPP project), and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), held an introductory online seminar on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP).

The seminar was organized with the support of the Kazakhstan Association of Regional Environmental Initiatives **ECOJER**.

The seminar covered the following topics:

- UNEP’s approach to SPP;
- the current state of public procurement in Kazakhstan and existing frameworks for implementing SPP principles;
- the UNDA SPP project and PAGE activities on SPP;
- examples and lessons learned from other UNDA project countries (Kyrgyzstan, Georgia);
- preparation of an SPP status assessment and legal review in Kazakhstan under PAGE.

The seminar was opened with welcoming remarks by Mr. R. Beketayev, Vice Minister of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Mr. A. Primkulov, Vice Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. They expressed support for the project and readiness for dialogue on integrating sustainability principles into Kazakhstan’s public procurement system.

Mr. Beketayev also informed participants about ongoing activities in the SPP field in Kazakhstan. For example, the Ministry of Finance, together with relevant government bodies (including the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources), is working on introducing green procurement—procurement that incorporates environmental protection criteria, renewable energy use, minimal emissions, and recycling.

These progressive sustainable development provisions are already partially included in the draft Law on Public Procurement currently under consideration by the Mazhilis of Parliament.

The Vice Minister emphasized that public procurement is a powerful instrument for achieving strategic sustainable development goals, taking into account environmental, economic, and social aspects.

From the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, the Vice Minister also presented ongoing work on modernizing environmental legislation. The draft of a new Environmental Code is currently under discussion in the Mazhilis.

The new Code is aligned with OECD best practices and aims to:

- promote the greening of Kazakhstani business;
- increase public participation in environmental decision-making.

For the first time, the Ministry has introduced the concepts of “**green technologies**” and “**green projects**” into legislation and has initiated the development of a “**green taxonomy**” to stimulate environmental investments.

In her welcoming remarks, Ms. Aidai Kurmanova, Head of UNEP’s Subregional Office for Central Asia, noted that SPP activities in Kazakhstan—particularly under the UNDA project and the PAGE programme—will help the country make progress toward **SDG Target 12.7**:

“Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.”

She also highlighted that project outcomes will support Kazakhstan in implementing the Resolution adopted at the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in April 2019, which calls on all Member States to develop SPP policies and update their public procurement legal frameworks in line with SDG 12.7 commitments.

UNEP remains open to cooperation and support for Kazakhstan in this area.

During the seminar, Mr. Farid Yaker (UNEP) presented the concept of SPP and its benefits for economic, social, and environmental sectors.

Using examples from the European Union, China, and the Republic of Korea—where SPP principles are already applied—he demonstrated how governments can achieve budget savings by using environmentally friendly products without harming the environment or human health.

Practical examples of initial SPP implementation steps supported by the UNDA SPP project were presented by:

- Mr. Kakha Demetrashvili, Deputy Chairman of the State Procurement Agency of Georgia;
- Mr. Kubat Kanimetov, Director of the Promotion and Development Center, Kyrgyzstan.

It should be recalled that in 2012 UNEP developed and successfully implemented its SPP methodology in countries of:

- Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova);
- the Caucasus (Georgia);
- Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan).

This experience will be introduced in Kazakhstan for potential further implementation. UNEP is ready to cooperate with governmental and non-governmental organizations in Kazakhstan to promote SPP ideas and apply them in practice, as SPP is one of the key tools for transitioning to a **“green economy.”**

Mr. Nurlan Sharipov presented the current state of public procurement in Kazakhstan, existing frameworks for implementing SPP principles, and progress achieved in this area.

Mr. Kuanysh Baltabayev, National SPP Expert, presented the work plan for the SPP status assessment and legal review project. He also introduced UNEP’s SPP questionnaire and invited participants to take part in the survey (to be distributed in December 2020).

The seminar was attended by representatives of:

- central and local executive government bodies;
- quasi-governmental sector organizations;
- international organizations;
- business associations and public organizations;
- companies participating in public and quasi-public procurement.

A total of 56 participants attended (see attached list).

Participants noted the high level of organization and expressed strong interest in implementing the Sustainable Public Procurement project.

The seminar moderator from UNEP, Ms. Lesya Nikolaeva, thanked all participants for their active engagement and expressed appreciation to the two key government bodies—the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan—for supporting the SPP initiative. She also expressed hope for continued close cooperation.

Abbreviations

- **SPP** – Sustainable Public Procurement
- **CPD** – Public Association “Center for Promotion and Development”
- **SDGs** – Sustainable Development Goals
- **UNEP** – United Nations Environment Programme
- **PAGE** – Partnership for Action on Green Economy

- **UNDA SPP** – UN Development Account Project “Enhancing Sustainable Public Procurement for the Regional Transition to an Inclusive Green Economy in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia”