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Fifth Regional Workshop on Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: the Urban Nexus Chiang Mai, 17-19 June, 2015

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Managing rapidly growing cities and their urban regions is one of the most critical challenges facing Asia and the Pacific, and this is especially so with regards to the relationship of urban development policy and natural resources. Of all natural resources, energy, water and food are the most essential to sustain development efforts — but they are also the most vulnerable to future demand. The 2012 report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, for example, has warned that by 2030 the world will need at least 50 per cent more food, 45 per cent more energy and 30 per cent more water. Much of this demand is being driven by cities, and their urbanising regions. The Asia-Pacific region faces specific problems resulting from its energy and resource-intensive growth patterns.

In Asia-Pacific it is evident that managing the resource footprint of cities across various ecosystems calls for institutional coordination and other forms of collaboration - which has rarely been evident. The majority of cities/municipal administrations in Asia-Pacific continue to plan and manage along sectoral lines and within municipal boundaries, and rarely in a coordinated and integrative manner. Consequently they are not able to fully utilise the interaction and synergies between water, energy and food security and the potential co-benefits arising from integrated resource management.

The "nexus" approach aims at integrated planning and management processes of the key sectors of energy, water and food, and this can contribute substantially to the long-term sustainable development of rapidly growing cities in their regions. It is crucial, in this context, to involve municipal, subnational, national and supraregional actors and utilities towards more integrated planning and management of the nexus sectors.

Against this background, the project on "Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: the Urban Nexus" is assisting cities and countries in Asia-Pacific to adopt a nexus approach, developing nexus projects and integrating the nexus approach into urban planning. The project is implemented by GIZ in partnership with ESCAP and ICLEI and with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project supports ten cities in six countries, namely: China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Four Regional Workshops have been organized under the project so far, in June and December 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand; in June 2014 in Da Nang, Viet Nam and in December 2014 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Regional workshops provide a platform for exchange of experiences among participating cities and for multi-stakeholder dialogue between cities, national governments, meso level organizations, academia & research institutions, the private sector, networks of cities and international financing organizations.



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Moreover, national policy dialogues have been organized in the Philippines, Thailand and Mongolia, as well as technical trainings and peer-to-peer learning.

Objectives

Building on the discussions that took place at the previous regional workshops and national dialogues, the Fifth Regional Workshop will be organized from 17 to 19 June 2015 in Chiang Mai, Thailand with the following objectives:

- Review and discuss experiences in participating cities in developing nexus projects.
- Review current policies and programmes in support of Nexus approaches in participating countries, in order to identify the elements of a policy framework to enable urban Nexus initiatives to thrive in the countries.
- Discuss the governance dimensions of the urban nexus, both within and across municipal boundaries.
- Develop policy recommendations for the removal of barriers to the adoption of nexus approaches at the local level and for the institutionalization of the nexus approach into urban planning and management.
- Identify measures to integrate the urban nexus initiative into the emerging post-2015 Development Agenda and the HABITAT III preparatory process and develop recommendations to feed into the regional processes.

Audience and Participants

An estimated 120 international and local participants will be attending the workshop, including:

- 1. Local government officials from the partner cities and from utilities of the Urban Nexus project.
- 2. National and sub-national government officials from the countries of the partner cities from relevant departments and line ministries
- 3. Representatives of network of cities, international organizations, international financing institutions, academia & research organizations, private sector enterprises and other relevant stakeholders with an interest in integrated resource management.

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