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Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: The Urban Nexus

Rationale:

The urban population in Asia is growing by 44 million people per year. This rapid urbanization brings about major challenges for urban supply and municipal utilities. In particular, when it comes to water supply and sanitation systems, energy supply and energy efficiency, land use and food security, most Asian cities have reached a critical situation already today that jeopardizes sustainable development. Municipal administrations in Asia plan and manage along sectorial lines and not in an integrated manner. Thus, they are not able to fully utilize the interaction and synergies in the three nexus sectors (i.e. water, energy and food security) and their related potentials during the implementation processes. The underlying causes go back to a wide range of responsibilities and competences, often lying with the regional and national level, that is, beyond the immediate sphere of influence of the city governments. This is especially true for the sectors of energy and agriculture.

During the recent Rio+20 Conference in May 2012 the issues of water, energy and food security and their interrelationship gained greater international attention and now play a major role with regard to the updated agenda.

Objective

In the framework of the project up to ten selected cities in six Asian countries will be supported with a view to nexus-compliant integrated resource management. During the implementation period, the basis for an integrated resource management approach will be developed in selected Asian cities through the module objective: Capacities (institutional and personnel) for integrated urban resource management have been developed in selected Asian cities.

Project name	Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: the Urban Nexus		
Commisioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Coopera- tion and Development (BMZ)		
Project region	China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam		
Lead execut- ing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH		
Political Partner	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UN ESCAP)		
Duration	19.04.2013 – 31.12.2015		

Approach

The project focus is on the topics of secure water supply and sanitation systems, energy security and efficiency, land use, physical planning and food security. Moreover, an exchange of knowledge and experiences and the cooperation between public, private and civil-society stakeholders is essential. Strategically, the project will focus on two core elements. On the one hand, it will be key to identifying and developing nexus initiatives that will demonstrate in an exemplary way how to integrate the nexus approach into urban planning and development processes. On the other hand, it is planned to ensure that the regional exchange and dissemination of successful practical approaches to integrated resource management is undertaken through an efficient network.





Urban agriculture in Da Nang, Vietnam Signing of MoU with H. Mayor John G. Bongat, Naga City

The following city partners/countries are participating:

- Ulan Bator (1,200,000 inhabitants), Mongolia;
- Ba'nan, (920.000 inhabitants), China ;
- Rizhao (2,880,000 inhabitants), China ;
- Weifang/Binhai Development Zone (9,000,000/ 1.000,000 inhabitants), China:
- Korat (180,000 inhabitants), Thailand ;
- Chiang Mai (150,000 inhabitants), Thailand;
- Da Nang (900,000 inhabitants), Vietnam;
- Yogyakarta, (388,000 inhabitants) Indonesia;
- Naga City (180,000 inhabitants), Philippines,
- Santa Rosa (330,000 inhabitants), Philippines.



The project is based on a multi-level approach. The central starting point is the local level with the municipal administrations/planning offices that receive advisory services for an improved integration of their resource management in the sectors of energy, water and food security (agriculture).

At the meso-level, among others, the city associations, training institutions and non-governmental organizations are crucial stakeholders.

At the macro-level, the project targets national governments and international organizations to ensure that the project is linked to the international Rio+20 debate.

The start of the cooperation with the partner cities is marked by the establishment of Nexus Task Forces with representatives from all key involved offices and departments.

The consultation process will involve policy-makers at the national, regional and local level to achieve high levels of motivation among the staff of the municipal administrations in their efforts to improve the integration of their resource planning and to make sure they have the backing of the national level.

While UN ESCAP is the political partner organization, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives South East Asia (ICLEI SEA) is the implementing organization.

Results:

The results and experiences from the different fields of work are evaluated and processed on a continuous basis and made available for discussion within the dialogue and learning platform and in the context of regional workshops and network meetings. The structured exchange of information includes representatives from research institutions, from the civil society and private sector in order to ensure the widest possible basis for the exchange of experiences and contribute to the development of innovative and holistic approaches for integrated urban resource management. Peerto-peer learning will be complemented by exposure visits and study trips to the partner cities, in particular those that implement especially innovative approaches or successful solutions in anyone of the fields.

A first International Nexus Conference took place in June 2013 marking the "kick-off" of the Project.

The cities are refining their Nexus project proposals while establishing Nexus task forces in parallel.

Methodologies for screening the cities as well as the project proposals and the development of a competition system are underway. In December 2013 a workshop organized by UN ESCAP will draw a first balance on the progress of Nexus initiatives and mayor bottlenecks.

Interestingly enough, while the water, energy and food resources are decreasing at an alarming rate, solid waste is increasing tremendously becoming a serious problem for the municipalities and a health hazard. Along with the water-energy-food nexus solutions for waste separation at source, cost covering tariffs for waste disposal and recycling should be considered for inclusion into the nexus approach for Asian cities

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