

## **National Dialogue on the Urban Nexus in Thailand** **UNCC, Bangkok, 19 March, 2015**

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### **Background**

The rapid urbanisation of the Asia-Pacific region entails the risk of widening supply gaps, in particular for water and sanitation systems, energy, land and food. However, the majority of cities/municipal administrations and municipal utilities 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 and planning for cities and their regions.

It is increasingly evident that the resource footprint of cities as well as ecosystem boundaries transcends administrative boundaries, calling for coordination across actors and institutions. The need for integrated planning requires a multi-disciplinary approach as well as effective and dynamic governance.

The nexus approach aims at integrated planning and management processes of the key sectors of energy, water and food security, 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 and regional actors and utilities towards more integrated planning and management of the nexus sectors.

To respond to these needs, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in partnership with ICLEI, are implementing the project “Integrated resource management in Asian Cities: the urban nexus”, financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project supports ten cities in six countries, namely: China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The project is providing technical advice to municipal administrations/planning offices to oversee the design, planning and, where possible, implementation of practical nexus initiatives (with a focus on water, energy and/or food security) and at the same time seeks to feed the experiences gained at the local level into a regional dialogue and learning platform to achieve a pooling of knowledge and the potential for synergies in action.

Four Regional Workshops have been organized under the project so far which provided an opportunity for city governments to enter into a dialogue with national governments and other relevant stakeholders and discuss the elements of an enabling framework for urban nexus initiatives to thrive. One of the major recommendations from the Fourth Regional Workshop was that nexus approaches can and should be embedded into planning frameworks, at both national and local levels, so they become normative. The key role of cross-sectoral and planning ministries as “natural” partners supporting cities in their nexus approaches was emphasized. The workshop called for new

formats of communication and problem solving. In this regard, the dialogue between national and local governments based on concrete case-studies initiated by the project in Philippines was highlighted as a useful example.

## Objectives

Building on the recommendations from the Fourth Regional Workshop and the successful discussions that took place at the first national-local dialogue in Philippines, the national dialogue on the Urban Nexus in Thailand has the following objectives:

1. Create a platform for exchange between and among local governments and the national government, particularly on issues concerning the water, food, and energy sectors.
2. Identify solutions to specific challenges and issues arising from city-level nexus implementation using the cases of Chiang Mai and Nakhon Ratchasima.
3. Determine existing and planned initiatives at the national level that cut across the nexus sectors which are relevant to the city-level nexus projects being implemented.

## Audience and Participants

The target audience comprises:

1. National government officials from the various departments relevant to the nexus, particularly on issues of public works and planning, energy, water, wastewater, solid waste and finance.
2. Provincial and Local government officials from the partner cities in Thailand
3. Representatives of network of cities, private sector enterprises, financing institutions, donors and other relevant stakeholders with an interest in integrated resource management.

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