

**Central Asia Rule of Law Programme:
Promoting Transparency and Action against economic crime (CA TAEC)**

Project Summary: Regional Component (CA TAEC REG)

Project title	Promoting Transparency and Action against economic crime
Project area	Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan
Implemented by	Economic Crime and Cooperation Division, Action against Crime Department, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe
Duration	48 months (starting from January 2020)

SUMMARY

The Joint Programme Agreement for the “Central Asia Rule of Law Programme” was signed in November 2019 between the Council of Europe and the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Programme aims at reinforcing the human rights, rule of law and democracy in the countries of Central Asia in accordance with European and other applicable international standards.

The Programme started in January 2020 with a duration of 48 months. It will cover all five countries of the region – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – and will be in line with the Council of Europe Policy for Neighbourhood Regions.

The project on “Promoting transparency and action against economic crime” (CA TAEC) will focus on strengthening authorities’ capacities in the region to fight and prevent economic crime and corruption, based on regional priorities, as well as priority areas of the countries concerned. These will be addressed through a **regional component** and **five country-specific components**.

REGIONAL COMPONENT: BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The needs assessment performed for the purposes of this project resulted in the identification of two distinct priority areas, namely:

Area 1: Business integrity and compliance in the private sector; and

Area 2: Anti-corruption, AML and asset recovery systems in the countries of Central Asia.

Area 1: Business integrity and compliance in the private sector

The countries of the Central Asian region have a set of common challenges, needs and priorities in the area of transparency, business integrity and the protection of the rights of entrepreneurs. Overall the systems for ensuring transparent governance with regard to the business sector are at their nascent stages in the region. While a number of countries have already adopted formal

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mechanisms for the protection of the rights of entrepreneurs, these generally lack the necessary degree of institutional standing and capacities to meaningfully address systemic issues related to extortion and solicitation from the business sector. Specific channels for receiving and handling complaints from entrepreneurs are absent, and mechanisms for interaction with the law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities on such cases have not yet been made fully operational. These issues are exacerbated by a lack of integrated whistle-blower mechanisms, which can be used by the private sector as alternative means to raise issues of unlawful solicitation and extortion.

Area 2: Anti-corruption, AML/CFT and asset recovery

A range of common challenges exist in the Central Asian region in the field of anti-corruption, AML/CFT and asset recovery. At the strategic level, there is a general lack of a solid evidentiary basis for anti-corruption strategies and action plans, deficient budget planning for effective strategy implementation and absence of timelines and measurable indicators to assess the progress and impact. In the institutional area the establishment of numerous layers of government agencies and overlapping interagency structures poses significant co-ordination challenges. This usually results in weak institutional, financial and functional independence of specialised institutions and poor implementation and ineffective law enforcement practice. High corruption risks have been established in public procurement, as well as the sector of publicly owned or controlled enterprises.

OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED RESULTS, ACTIVITIES

<p>Specific objectives</p>	<p>Specific objective 1. To enhance business integrity and compliance in the private sector, reducing administrative barriers and ensuring the protection of rights of entrepreneurs in countries of Central Asia.</p> <p>Specific objective 2. To enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption, anti-money laundering and asset recovery systems in the countries of Central Asia.</p>
<p>Expected results</p>	<p>Result 1. Countries of the Central Asian region establish networks and exchange experience on business integrity practices and protection of rights of entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Regional studies/guidelines on good practices on business integrity; protection of the rights of entrepreneurs; and establishment of regional benchmarks; ii. Exchange and sharing of methodologies and experiences on specific sectoral reforms through technical and policy advise-level fora.

Result 2. Capacities of competent authorities involved in combating and preventing corruption, economic crime and terrorism are enhanced.

Activities:

- i. Regional studies in the field of corruption, economic crime and terrorism focusing on specific regional risks and threats;
- ii. Regional cascade training programmes for law enforcement judges and prosecutors in the areas of economic crime, corruption, money laundering, terrorism and its financing;
- iii. Regional cascade training programmes for civil service staff on prevention of corruption, ethics standards and conflict of interest resolution.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Council of Europe and more specifically the Economic Crime and Cooperation Division (ECCD) of the Action against Crime Department will be responsible for the implementation of the Project through a delegation agreement under indirect management by the European Union Office in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

For the purpose of implementing activities under this project, international and national consultants of appropriate expertise and background will be engaged pursuant to Council of Europe procurement rules.

Project activities will include assessments, provision of expert advice/opinions, conferences, roundtables and seminars, workshops, training courses and researches. Information on the activities and project outputs will be made available through the project website.

CONTACTS

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