

EDD/NEASPEC/SOM(14)/3
8 April 2009

ENGLISH ONLY

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Fourteenth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

8-9 April 2009
Moscow, Russian Federation

REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
(Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda)

THE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION OF DUST AND SANDSTORM
Note by the Secretariat

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| I. Overview of NEASPEC Action on DSS and Proposed Project..... | 2 |
| II. Issues for Consideration..... | 4 |

Annex I. Project Proposal on Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorm from Source
Areas in China and Mongolia

I. OVERVIEW OF NEASPEC ACTION ON DSS AND PROPOSED PROJECT

1. From early 2003 to March 2005, a project on “Regional Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms (DSS) in North-East Asia” was jointly undertaken by four UN and international agencies - ADB, UNCCD, UNESCAP and UNEP - and four NEASPEC member countries - China, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea. The project consisted of two major parts: the establishment of the regional network for DSS monitoring and early warning; and demonstration projects for the prevention and control of DSS.

2. Based on the outcome and recommendation of the project, ESCAP prepared a GEF project on “Joint Demonstration Project for Preventing and Controlling Dust and Sandstorms Originated in Erlianhot (China) - Zamin Uud (Mongolia) Source Areas” through consultations with the State Forestry Administration of China and the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia. The proposal particularly focused on establishing a re-vegetation programme and sustainable grassland management programme; strengthening human and institutional capacity in sustainable land management; developing cooperative mechanism between the municipalities of Erlianhot and Zamin Uud.

3. The 11th and 12th Senior Officials Meetings reviewed the approach and component of the proposed project and the progress in seeking a GEF funding, and confirmed the strong support of the member countries for the project. Nevertheless, the Secretariat was not able to secure the GEF funding due to the uncertain situation during the GEF replenishment process and subsequently the policy reformulation for GEF-4th cycle of 2006 -2010.

4. The 13th SOM reviewed a project proposal of the Mongolian Government on “DSS Monitoring and Assessment Capabilities in Source Areas”, and accepted the proposal in principle. Furthermore, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to further develop a detailed project document in collaboration with the Government and recommended to strengthen coordination with other ongoing initiatives on the relevant subject, including, in particular, a TEMM (Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meeting of China, Japan and the ROK) project on DSS, and to focus on source area management. The Meeting also expressed its view that the revised project proposal should ensure the full participation of NEASPEC member countries.

5. Considering the planned project of TEMM and ADB on monitoring and early warning of DSS, the Secretariat had consultation with the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia about sifting the project focus towards prevention and control of DSS. Subsequently, the Secretariat undertook a fact-finding mission to Zamin Uud and Erinhot and further consultations with the Mongolia government officials and Chinese experts, respectively, in November 2008. After the mission, the Secretariat prepared the

attached project proposal and received the concurrence of the Mongolian Government in January 2009.

6. Drawing from the Master Plan and the discussions from the 11th to 13th SOM, the project proposes undertaking activities on a cross-border settlement area of Zamyn-Uud, Mongolian and Erinhot, China, which face each other with a distance of less than 5 km. However, the main and immediate beneficiary of the project will be Zamyn-Uud because the fact-finding mission found that China's rapid economic growth in recent years has enabled the country to put strong emphasis on both policy development and capital investment to address its severe desertification and DSS problems, particularly in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Erinhot today receives roughly US\$ 1.5 million annually through the Central Government allocation to undertake desertification and DSS prevention activities, and this allocation is expected to increase by 50% by 2010.

7. The condition has also enabled Erinhot to donate Zamyn-Uud between 10,000 and 20,000 tree seedlings annually since 2002 to support Zamyn-Uud's efforts in tackling similar issues. However, the lack of irrigation system in Zamyn-Uud unfortunately has not allowed many of those non-drought resistant species, donated by Erinhot, to flourish. Moreover, Erinhot recognizes the need for further cooperation with Zamyn-Uud to jointly combat the area's pressing desertification issue.

8. Zamyn-Uud has also received assistance from Mongolia's National Institute of Geo-ecology through the GEF Small Grants Programme to address desertification and DSS issues since 1998. Around 100,000 drought resistant native tree species have been planted to prevent soil erosion and shifting sands in and around the township. The programme has also piloted a small-scale seasonal irrigation system and tree nurseries. However, the lack of adequate capital and human resources has largely hampered the programme's further improvement, expansion and replication of its results. Some of the major obstacles identified through the programme based on its decade of experience are the lack of an irrigation system, quick-shifting sands, destroying newly planted trees and shrubs, and limited local interest.

9. Based on the above situation analysis, NEASPEC proposes to take a specific action, which should be most cost effectively and sustainably implemented within the limited funding availability. The proposed action will install three interdependent systems for Zamyn-Uud to effectively combat desertification and DSS for the period of two years:

- a) A simple irrigation system using Zamyn-Uud's wastewater;
- b) Irrigated natural wind- and sand-breaks along the railway, vital to the township's economic development; and
- c) Self-financing mechanisms for the above two systems through intercropping vegetable and fruit cultivation in the wind- and sand-breaks.

In order to support the proposed action, the project will also facilitate activities of cross-border experience sharing, capacity development and awareness-raising among local residents.

In this regard, the Secretariat proposes allocating US\$ 220,350 from the NEASPEC Core Fund to implement the proposed activities in the attached proposal. Furthermore, it is strongly encouraged non-immediately concerned member countries to make relevant contributions through their national institutes, international cooperation agencies, NGOs and the private sector, which possess eminent expertise in combating desertification and DSS in order to scale up activities and ensure the sustainability of project outcomes.

II. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. The Meeting may wish to provide guidance on the approach, component and modality of the proposed project and approve the project.
12. The Meeting may wish to receive proposals of national contributions to the project implementation.

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