



European Union Regional Programmes in Asia and Central Asia



EuropeAid



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

EU cooperation with Asia and Central Asia

The European Union (EU) has many years of experience in development cooperation. With some € 48.2 billion spent in 2009, the EU, composed of the Member States and the European Commission, is the world's largest aid donor. This sum amounts to almost 56 % of global aid and covers more than 160 countries and organisations.

Why is the EU committed to working with Asia and Central Asia?

Asia and Central Asia represent more than half the world's population. Yet while they account for over a quarter of the world's economic growth, they are home to two thirds of the world's poor. This is why the EU is committed to helping both regions eradicate poverty through sustainable development and successfully achieving the Millennium Development Goals¹.

Where is the EU contributing to development cooperation?

The EU's development cooperation in Asia and Central Asia uses two instruments – the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF). The main instrument providing assistance across the region is the DCI, while the EDF is specifically focused on two Asian countries which are considered part of the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The two instruments can be accessed only by developing countries. Apart from these instruments, the EU uses the ICI, a financing instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high-income countries and territories.

INSTRUMENT	COUNTRIES
Development Cooperation Instrument	Asia: 19 countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, DPR Korea ² , India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam Central Asia: 5 countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
European Development Fund	Asia: 2 countries – East Timor, Papua New Guinea
Instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high-income countries and territories	Asia: 7 countries and territories – Brunei, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, Macao, Singapore

How is the EU contributing to sustainable development in Asia and Central Asia?

In addition to the assistance given bilaterally by the 27 Member States, the EU has designed numerous development aid programmes. These programmes are implemented either between the EU and individual countries, or, between the EU and the region's countries as a whole.

Under the DCI instrument, € 5.187 billion have been allocated to Asia and € 719 million to Central Asia for 2007–2013.

¹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

² There is currently no official development cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); the launch of any such cooperation would be subject to the DPRK's proven commitment with regard to respecting its international obligations (source: Regional Strategy Paper 2007–2013).

EU contribution to regional cooperation³

The map (see insert) shows the EU's regional programmes for Asia and Central Asia funded under the DCI instrument. These programmes are designed to tackle challenges of a regional nature and to promote cooperation among countries on issues of common interest.

■ Which actions are funded at regional level?

The cooperation between the EU and the two regions is based on documents called Regional Strategy Papers. There is one Strategy Paper for each region.

The **Asia** Regional Strategy Paper for 2007–2013 identifies three priorities:

- 1 **Support to regional integration** – through regional bodies and organisations such as ASEM, ASEAN and SAARC⁴;
- 2 **Policy and know-how based cooperation** – including environment, energy and climate change, higher education, support to research institutes, and cross-border cooperation in animal and human health;
- 3 **Support to uprooted people** – notably helping with reconstruction and reintegration when people have been displaced by crises.

The **Central Asia** Regional Strategy Paper for 2007–2013 describes six main priorities:

- 1 **Energy** – notably energy market convergence, energy security, sustainable energy development and attracting investment;
- 2 **Education and science** – in particular individual mobility of students, professors and researchers and modernisation of higher education systems;
- 3 **Border management and the fight against drugs** – notably aligning local legislation with international and EU standards;
- 4 **Environment protection** – notably issues related to water resources;
- 5 **Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) development** – in particular improving the business climate and strengthening business intermediary organisations through capacity-building projects;
- 6 **Transport** – including the progressive integration of the transport market.

These six priorities are also in line with the **EU and Central Asia Strategy for a New Partnership** (adopted in June 2007), which sets out the policy guidelines for increasing the EU's commitment to Central Asia.

NOTE ON EUROPEAID

EuropeAid, the Commission's Cooperation Office, manages EU external aid programmes and ensures that development assistance is delivered worldwide.

Its main mission is to implement all EU external aid instruments. To ensure coherence, complementarity and coordination in implementing external assistance programmes worldwide and to make external aid more effective, EuropeAid works closely with partner countries as well as civil society, international organisations, the governments of EU Member States, and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

³ The programmes and countries presented here are those covered by the DCI only.

⁴ Respectively the Asia–Europe Meeting, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

SWITCH – Asia

The SWITCH–Asia programme was launched in 2007 with a budget of € 90 million; its objective is to promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in Asia. The programme aims to encourage change on the ground, among producers and consumers (mainly small and medium-sized enterprises), and also at the top, at policy-making level. So far, the programme has awarded funding to 30 projects in 15 countries across Asia. For example, SWITCH–Asia is providing € 1.9 million to support a project, managed by World Wide Fund (WWF) Austria, on sustainably growing and processing rattan in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. This project aims to introduce cleaner production practices in at least 50 % of the targeted SMEs in the rattan supply chain and to help them generate better economic returns.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation/environment/switch_en.htm

Central Asia Invest

The Central Asia Invest programme focuses on private-sector development. It supports business intermediary organisations in Central Asia by enhancing their ability to assist small businesses and build bridges between governments and the private sector. So far, 20 projects have been selected for funding. As an example, by the end of 2010, the services offered to lemon and apricot-drying farm businesses in Khatlon and Sughd in Tajikistan will be greatly improved. With a € 585 000 grant, specialised local agri-business intermediaries will develop a quality-control system for the value chain and improve processing-equipment technology. Marketing tools will be modernised and local business expertise further developed.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation-central-asia/sme-development/ca_invest_en.htm

Erasmus Mundus

The Erasmus Mundus partnerships (Action 2) support academic cooperation between European and non-European higher education institutions and offer individual scholarships for students and academics.

From 2007 to 2009, the programme (formerly Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows) funded 18 projects in Asia totalling some € 100 million and six projects in Central Asia amounting to some € 15 million.

A Tajik student in Turkey said: *"In my personal experience, I firstly developed much better research skills (...) I submitted two papers and attended two international conferences. My English improved and I also learned Turkish, so now I know five languages including my native tongue. It was a good opportunity for me to work in an international environment and improve my intercultural negotiation skills."*

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/education/education_erasmus_mundus_tempus_en.htm



EU Regional Cooperation with Asia and Central Asia

