



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE
Economic and Environmental Activities**



**Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE)
Report on the Co-ordination Meeting
9-10 November 2010, Vienna**

Executive Summary

On 9-10 November 2010, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) organized the CASE (Civic Action for Security and Environment) Co-ordination Meeting that brought together CASE practitioners from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan that included representatives of government agencies, CASE grantee NGOs, UNDP and OSCE field missions in the three countries. Several OSCE delegations were also invited as observers and participated at the meeting: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Finland, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, Tajikistan and United States.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to facilitate an exchange of experiences and lessons learned in implementing the first phase of the CASE Programme and to plan for the next phase.

CASE is a small grants programme to support activities of the civil society organizations in addressing environment and security challenges. It has initially been launched in Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2009 and then extended to Tajikistan in 2010. It aims for increasing public and political awareness on linkages between environment and security; strengthening technical and administrative capacity of the civil society organizations; and providing financial and technical assistance to civil society organizations for their projects that address environment and security challenges.

In relatively short time, CASE was able to attract EUR 447,000 from several donors, including the Governments of Austria, Canada (through ENVSEC), Luxembourg as well as the Statoil Corporation in Azerbaijan. It has also demonstrated success in mobilizing the interest of civil society organizations. In less than one year of implementation, 132 project proposals were received from NGOs in the three countries, out of which 32 were granted CASE funding support. In Armenia, 17 NGO projects; in Azerbaijan, 7 NGO projects have received CASE support. In Tajikistan, very recently 8 NGO projects were selected by the National Screening Board. Overall, CASE support has targeted the NGO activities mainly in the fields of climate change, mining, hazardous waste, natural disaster, and industrial compliance. Cross-cutting these themes, all the projects have strong elements of public awareness and participation with special focus on youth and women. In case of Armenia, CASE is an integral component of the Aarhus Centres Initiative. In Tajikistan two regional Aarhus Centres have been instrumental in disseminating the CASE information to civil

society organizations. In both countries, Aarhus Centres offer the platform and the CASE offers the means for ENVSEC's outreach to the civil society.

The CASE Programme has a decentralized management structure in each country that operates through the CASE National Screening Boards that include government, NGO, UNDP and OSCE representatives. The two ENVSEC partners-OSCE and UNDP- co-operate closely in implementing CASE in all three countries and provide guidance by serving in the National Screening Boards, in case of Tajikistan they are joined by the GTZ. The OSCE field missions co-ordinate the CASE implementation at the country level and the OCEEA provides overall guidance and facilitates co-operation and networking.

During the meeting, following a general introduction by the OCEEA, presentations were made by Government and NGO representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as by OSCE field missions in all three countries. This was followed by extensive discussions on several aspects of the CASE Programme, including its management, linkages with other initiatives, visibility, outreach and monitoring and evaluation.

There was a general recognition that the CASE programme has the full support and ownership of all three countries and was able to mobilize a great interest of the civil society organizations where it operates.

During the meeting, several strengths of the CASE programme were highlighted, including its decentralized management and decision-making structure, its demand-driven nature, its support for NGO capacity building, its facilitation of partnerships between government-civil society-academia-international organizations, and its transparent structure. In terms of its substantive strengths, it was emphasized that CASE has proved to be successful in promoting good environmental governance principles (citizens' participation and awareness, focus on youth and women, industrial compliance and transparency) and environmental security.

The meeting also identified a number of challenges that would require increased attention in the next phases of implementation including targeted capacity building programmes for civil society organizations, strengthened monitoring and evaluation, direct linkages with the larger scale ENVSEC projects, and resource mobilization.

Introduction

The CASE Co-ordination Meeting took place in Vienna, on 9-10 November 2010. The meeting aimed for discussion on experiences in implementation of and the way ahead for the Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE) Programme. CASE is a small grants programme to support the projects of civil society organizations (CSOs) that address environment and security challenges facing their countries. CASE finances promising CSO projects that demonstrate strong co-operation with their governments. It is currently being implemented in three countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan.

The Co-ordination Meeting brought together government and NGO representatives from Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as representatives of OSCE field missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. A representative of UNDP Country Office in Azerbaijan also joined the meeting. The meeting was also attended by representatives of several OSCE Delegations including Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Finland, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, Tajikistan, and the United States.

At the co-ordination meeting, stakeholders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan introduced the CASE Programme in their country. In the following sessions that were marked by lively exchanges, participants discussed on the institutional setup and linkages of the CASE Programme with partners, and sketched a vision for the future of the Initiative, debating the sustainability and visibility of CASE at project, country, and corporate level.

In his introductory remarks, *Mr. Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities* welcomed all participants and expressed his appreciation of the strong interest that all CASE stakeholders and a number of OSCE participating States take in the Initiative and this Co-ordination Meeting. He recalled the OSCE Review Conference and the strong emphasis that participating States put on the salience of environmental security threats and the role of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) in tackling them in the OSCE region. He assured participants that in 2011, when the OSCE will be chairing the ENVSEC Initiative, the OCEEA will strive to strengthen the security perspective of ENVSEC and promote ENVSEC at the 2011 Environment for Europe Conference in Astana and Rio + 20 preparatory conferences. Mr. Svilanovic went on to introduce participants to the goals of the CASE Programme and its strong linkages to the Aarhus Centres Initiative. He stressed the innovative nature of CASE's small grant mechanism and the functionality of its management structure which assured strong local ownership of civil society projects. Noting the success of CASE, he announced a further expansion of the Initiative. In doing so, he expressed his thanks to Government of Austria, Government of Canada, Government of Luxembourg and Statoil in Azerbaijan for their support to the CASE Programme and called for financial contributions by other interested participating States to secure the sustainability of CASE.

Session 1: CASE Implementation

Chair: Mr. Marc Baltès, Deputy Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Marc Baltès introduced the purpose of the meeting. He underlined that this was the first gathering of the CASE practitioners from the three countries to exchange experiences, best practices and lessons learned in implementation of the CASE programme. How to strengthen the CASE management structure; increase the linkages with Aarhus Centres Initiative; enhance CASE's outreach to civil society organizations; meet capacity building needs of civil society organizations; and strengthen monitoring and evaluation of CASE programme were the major issues to be discussed along with increasing its visibility and mobilizing additional resources.

Esra Buttanri, Environmental Affairs Advisor, OCEEA introduced the goals and structure of the CASE Programme to participants. She described the small grants mechanism at the heart of CASE as a "quick delivery mechanism" of project outcomes in the field of environmental security. CASE is fulfilling a variety of functions. It serves as an innovative, transparent, and easily accessible mechanism to facilitate the involvement of civil society in the environment and security field. It encourages CSOs to pool resources and build on each other's strengths and expertise. It makes use of the assets that CSOs possess to reach out to local communities and citizens to deliver effectively "environment and security" messages. Finally, CASE mobilizes civil society for promoting environmental co-operation, conflict prevention, and confidence-building.

CASE is being implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and recently also in Tajikistan. The initiative is designed to increase public awareness of environment and security linkages, strengthen the capacity of CSOs in this field, and to provide financial and technical assistance to CSOs for their projects that address environment and security challenges.

The attainment of these goals is facilitated by the innovative CASE management structure that ensures that local actors coming together in National Screening Boards (NSBs) set the topical priorities of the CASE Programme in the country and decide on the selection of CSO projects for support by CASE small grants.

Since its inception, a total of 132 grant applications were received by CASE, and 32 were approved in Armenia (17 projects), Azerbaijan (7 projects) and Tajikistan (8 projects).

CASE's strengths lie in its decentralized management and decision-making structure, its demand-driven nature, its support for NGO capacity building, its facilitation of partnerships between government-civil society-academia-international organizations, its transparent and well-coordinated structure. In terms of its substantive strengths, CASE has proved to be successful in promoting good environmental governance principles (citizens' participation and awareness, focus on youth and women, industrial compliance and transparency) and environmental security. NGO projects supported by CASE addressed specifically climate change, water, hazardous chemicals, waste and natural disasters.

Next steps for CASE will include a review of CASE implementation so far, development of capacity-building programmes for NGOs in project formulation, management and reporting, strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation framework of CASE and reinforcing the linkages of the programme to Aarhus Centres and ENVSEC. Ms. Buttanri concluded by

explaining to participants the importance of increased financial resources for sustaining the grant-making process, for strengthening the capacity building component of CASE, for being able to replicate and upscale successful projects, and ultimately, for extending CASE to additional countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

CASE Azerbaijan

Mr. Amil Sefiyev, Chief Adviser of Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, commended the achievements made in the framework of the CASE programme, emphasizing the complementarities between the government's environmental policies and programmes and the priority topics of the CASE country strategy. The speaker stressed the importance of working closely with the civil society organizations and increasing their capacity and experience, as well as creating enabling environment for co-operation with the government agencies in the context of environment and security challenges. He mentioned that the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources supported the CASE programme implementation through participating in the CASE National Screening Board, providing expertise and information support to the grantee projects, as well as supplying the re-forestation related projects with necessary planting materials. He expressed the Ministry's support to the further implementation of the programme given its contribution to strengthening civil society's role in tackling environment and security issues, improving public control mechanisms and public participation in environmental decision-making, and increasing public sensitivity to environmental issues.

Ms Zahra Ahmadova, Senior Project Assistant, OSCE Office in Baku, briefed participants on the implementation of the CASE Programme in Azerbaijan. CASE Azerbaijan was launched in November 2009 and supported financially by the Government of Austria and Statoil. After setting up the NSB and developing the CASE Azerbaijan Country Strategy, the Office in Baku launched two calls for project proposals, in Fall 2009 and in spring 2010, respectively. The CASE NSB in Azerbaijan, which is responsible for setting priorities for the country programme and for selection of projects for CASE support consists of 4 members - the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, UNDP, OSCE Office in Baku, and Statoil Azerbaijan. Ms. Ahmadova detailed the grant award process that included pre-screening of projects by the OSCE Office in Baku, short-listing of projects by the NSB where projects are scored on a set of objective criteria, including calls for reformulation in case of project deficiencies and a final review and selection. In the two calls for proposals, CASE Azerbaijan received a total of 60 project submissions and made 7 grants in the amount of approximately EUR 70,000 in total. Ms Ahmadova described CASE Azerbaijan's approach to CASE implementation as guided by a focus on fewer projects with feasible objectives and sustainable impact that allows for close monitoring and provision of support to on-going projects by the OSCE Office in Baku. The projects supported by CASE grants in Azerbaijan addressed the following environment and security challenges:

- Reducing negative impacts of mining on the environment
- Public awareness raising about climate change and networking
- Stimulating change in behaviour regarding solid household waste management
- Strengthening youth participation in environmental protection
- Awareness raising and improving dialogue around hazardous industrial waste

- Mitigating landslide risks and combating land degradation.

So far projects were concentrated in the north of the country where the NGO community was better developed, but with the expansion of CASE Azerbaijan, the CASE team was increasingly targeting the south of the country.

Mr. Chingiz Mammadov, Project Analyst, UNDP Azerbaijan, who also serves as a NSB Member for CASE Azerbaijan, focused his presentation on the role of the CASE Programme in addressing the environment and security Problems in Azerbaijan. He reiterated the importance of CASE involving youth in its environment and security activities, since youth were susceptible to innovative ideas and young leaders could serve as multipliers in raising awareness. He also emphasized the importance of CASE addressing climate change, because it is exacerbating unsustainable land use practices in Azerbaijan, which is accelerating land degradation. Mr. Mammadov also pointed to the trade-offs involved in implementing any CASE project. One such trade-off presents itself in the selection of NGOs for support under CASE. Selecting strong Baku-based NGOs, the NSB could expect the projects to be professionally managed and reliable in impact. On the other hand, the capacity needs of weaker NGOs in the regions are even bigger, and these NGOs might be closer to the grassroots. The NSB in Azerbaijan is taking this trade-off into account in making its decisions. Mr. Mammadov also stressed the importance of ensuring complementarity of CASE with other relevant initiatives on the ground. An example of good practice in this regard is solid waste project that was implemented by Norway and UNDP in Azerbaijan and supplemented by a CASE project that focused on the gender and youth dimensions of the problem addressed. Mr. Mammadov concluded his presentation by noting that the environment and security activities that CASE features also yield important economic and social benefits for stakeholders.

Mr. Irshad Abbasov, Director of Eco-Renaissance, an Environmental NGO and CASE grant recipient from Azerbaijan, briefed meeting participants about the project that his organization is implementing under CASE. The project, entitled “Establishing a Citizen Control Mechanism in Gedebey district Affected by the Mining Industry” focuses on a part of Azerbaijan that is rich in natural resources but also heavily affected by the environmental consequences of mining. The project aims at involving local citizens in monitoring mining operations for their environmental consequences. It is implemented in close co-operation with the local government and the leading mining company in the region, AMIC. After introducing residents to the environmental consequences and risks of mining, Eco-Renaissance selected a number of local residents for a training on the consequences of mining in terms of pollution, on citizen environmental rights, and on mechanisms of environmental monitoring. A permanent working group of five was set up and is supported throughout the monitoring process and subsequent reporting. Working group members received an additional 4-day intensive training that was tailored to their specific responsibilities. The training included negotiation techniques, media relations and reporting skills. The working group has already assumed its duties. These project activities were accompanied by a variety of meetings with stakeholders in the region to build support for the project and raise awareness among the population of the challenges addressed by this project. In implementing this project, Eco-Renaissance also met with significant challenges. This included a lack of public trust in the project, a lack of corporate responsibility on the part of mine operators in the project area, a lack of civil society engagement in the district, and a virtual absence of any environmental information on the mining operations in Gedebey. Mr. Abbasov concluded his

presentations by providing concrete recommendations for replication of civic control projects in other regions.

CASE Armenia

Ms Nouneh Zastoukhova, First Secretary, Acting Head of UN Desk, International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Armenia, informed participants about the development of CASE Armenia and the role that the Government of Armenia plays in that process. CASE was launched in Armenia in 2009, when the ENVSEC National Advisory Group came together to consider the implementation of CASE in Armenia. This meeting formed the basis for the development of the CASE Country Strategy. The Country Strategy identified a set of environmental challenges that Armenia was facing. These include the rehabilitation of Lake Sevan, deforestation, industrial waste treatment and private and industrial waste disposal, the environmental situation in the national capital Yerevan, ground erosion in the main agricultural zone of Armenia, the Ararat plain, biodiversity preservation, air and water pollution in Yerevan and the industrial and mining hubs of Alaverdi, Ararat, Vanadzor and Hrazdan, and low capacity for wastewater treatment. These were also among those topics identified as priorities for CASE projects. The CASE NSB in Armenia is meeting in intervals of 6 months and consists of 11 members representing international organizations (UNDP, OSCE Office in Yerevan), the Armenian government (ENVSEC National Focal Point, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Territorial Administration, and Ministry of Nature Protection) and civil society (WWF Armenia, Association of Human Sustainable Development). Ms Zastoukhova stressed the close co-operation between CASE and the 15 Aarhus Centres in Armenia. Aarhus Centres were crucial supporters of CASE Armenia, providing expertise, and facilitating co-ordination of activities among civil society actors. CASE Armenia had received 42 project proposals in its call for proposals announced in November 2009. Of these it had selected 17 projects for implementation. Project selection in Armenia was geographically balanced and comprehensive in terms of addressing topical priorities identified in the CASE National Strategy. Ms Zastoukhova concluded by reiterating the support of the government of Armenia to the CASE Programme.

Ms. Gohar Ghazinyan, National Programme Officer, OSCE Office in Yerevan, commenced her presentation with an overview of the Armenian Aarhus Centre Network that acts as a key partner to the CASE Programme in Armenia. There are currently 15 Aarhus Centres active in Armenia working to secure the right of citizens to environmental information, the right to public participation in environmental decision-making, and the right to environmental justice. The Armenian Aarhus Centres have recently modernized their governance structure, and received support by boards of experts, steps that were designed to refocus and standardize the performance of Aarhus Centres. Both the CASE Programme and UNDP's GEF Small Grants Programme use the resources and platforms provided by Aarhus Centres in Armenia for project activities and outreach. Ms. Ghazinyan used the second part of her presentation to provide brief and concise overviews of the 17 projects currently under implementation under CASE Armenia. She repeatedly stressed the complementarity of CASE Armenia with the ENVSEC Initiative and the priorities which the 2004 ENVSEC Assessment of environment and security risks in the South Caucasus yielded. The NGO projects that are implemented in Armenia address the following issues:

- Sustainable urban transportation
- Environmental risks of arsenic graveyard
- Co-operation with local industries for reduction of pollution and promoting the PRTR protocol
- Local environmental action planning
- Natural disasters
- Establishment of youth environmental networks
- Environmental awareness campaigns targeting local communities, youth and women

Ms. Nune Harutyunyan, Director, REC Caucasus Armenia Branch Office, an environmental NGO and CASE grant recipient from Armenia, introduced participants to the CASE project that her organization is implementing, entitled “Development of the Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) for Kapan city”. She pointed to the expertise that Regional Environmental Centres have in developing LEAPs. LEAPs build on co-operation between all segments of society, including authorities, business and civil society, benefitting the whole community. LEAPs identify environmental challenges faced by the community and design appropriate solutions for them at community level. The goal of this specific CASE project is to improve environmental management and introduce environmental planning at the local level by means of public participation in the environmental decision-making process. To this end, REC Caucasus convened an expert group tasked with guiding stakeholders through the process of LEAP development. This expert group conducted desk research and stakeholder interviews generating information on the environmental situation of the city of Kapan. To support the LEAP process and raise awareness among the local population a stakeholder committee from among civil society and the private sector was convened and will be consulted throughout the process. Upon development of a status report on the environmental situation, the expert group will hold community meetings to inform the public and gather proposals on development of priorities for the plan, and hold trainings to build local capacity for devising a LEAP. Upon finalization of a draft LEAP, the stakeholder committee and local authorities are invited to a public hearing to provide comments and feedback, before the final handover of the plan takes place.

CASE Tajikistan

Ms. Nana Baramidze, Environmental Officer, OSCE Office in Tajikistan informed participants about the first steps taken in implementation of CASE in Tajikistan. The CASE NSB in Tajikistan consists of representatives of GTZ and UNDP, government representatives from the Committee for Environment Protection, civil society representatives and the OSCE Office in Tajikistan representative. The CASE NSB is responsible for setting programme priorities, for programme promotion, and for project proposal screening and evaluation. In Tajikistan, the Aarhus Centres and CASE Tajikistan project staff worked together during the recent first project selection process. The three Aarhus Centres served as a platform for information, consultations and assistance to potential CASE applicants. Moreover, the Aarhus Centres will stand ready to support CASE grantees in implementation of their projects in the future. CASE Tajikistan focuses on the peripheral regions of Tajikistan where NGO capacity needs are greatest and outside support for NGOs is sparse. This strategy, elaborated by the CASE NSB with strong support of the government, will also aim at raising

the environmental awareness of communities in the peripheral regions. CASE Tajikistan approved 8 projects out of 30 proposals submitted. The selected projects neatly reflect the breadth of topical priorities and cross-cutting themes that had been identified in the CASE National Strategy. This first batch of projects will start implementation in December 2010 and address the following areas:

- Community-based disaster risk management
- Conservation of mountain eco-systems
- Awareness-raising on environment and environment & security linkages at the community level with specific focus on youth
- Awareness-raising on radioactive safety
- Strengthening youth Green Patrols

Discussion- Session 1

During the ensuing discussion, the potential of CASE to address new environmental and security threats was discussed. UNDP, within the framework of ENVSEC has been implementing a project detailing climate change scenarios in the three countries of the South Caucasus, while the OSCE Office in Tajikistan is taking a climate change survey also aimed at developing scenarios. It was noted that CASE could play an increasing role in complementing these efforts in the field of climate change in the countries of CASE implementation. Furthermore, participants discussed the need for strengthening the exchanges of expertise within the CASE and ENVSEC Initiatives. The Aarhus Centres, especially in the South Caucasus region have made good experience with exchanges of experts between countries.

Session 2: Discussion on Priority Issues Related to CASE Implementation

Chair: Mr. Jan Olsson, Head of Economic and Environmental Unit, OSCE Office in Baku

In this second session of the meeting, participants discussed major issues pertaining to implementation of CASE in all three countries.

The discussion first turned to the question of the **efficiency and effectiveness of the CASE management structures**. Due to the decentralized approach that CASE takes to secure flexibility of its programme, the CASE management structure of each country has some distinctive features and a comparison of experiences with these different approaches is valuable. In Azerbaijan, membership of the NSB is comprised of the Ministry of Environment, the OSCE, UNDP and Statoil, while in Armenia the NSB is more inclusive and also features civil society representatives. In case of Tajikistan, GTZ's membership in the National Screening Board in addition to UNDP is also important in terms of ensuring co-ordination among different international partners.

Participants acknowledged that convincing civil society organizations to work on the NSB pro bono represents a challenge because membership of the Board rules out application for CASE grants. Given high interest in the CASE programme among the NGO community and strong affiliation among a low number of NGOs in Azerbaijan, there is a lack of suitable candidates for NSB membership. This is also the reason why there is currently no NGO serving on Azerbaijan's NSB. Armenia on the other hand adopted rotational NGO

membership on the NSB. As a consequence of its narrower membership, the NSB in Azerbaijan has been meeting frequently, has been closely involved in CASE programme administration and has developed smooth decision-making. Representatives of CASE Azerbaijan regarded their NSB model a success. Project selection is neutral and entirely based on merit in Azerbaijan. Decision-making on the NSB is based on consensus, and narrow membership allows for in-depth deliberation among NSB members, which increases the quality of the project selection process that is based on a strict scoring and mathematical evaluation process.

In Armenia, decision-making on project selection is likewise is not strictly based on consensus. In the absence of consensus on projects to be selected, the averages of scorings by NSB members are used to rank and select projects. The focus is on making the CASE selection process as transparent, participatory and visible as possible, and large NSB membership of a variety of different stakeholders is beneficial in this regard.

Project selection represents CASE stakeholders with a certain dilemma that is built into the CASE approach and that CASE country teams and NSBs need to be aware of and take into account in their project selection processes. CASE has three major objectives: to increase public awareness on environment and security challenges; to address public and security threats through high-quality projects, and to build the capacity of CSOs to implement environment and security projects.

The latter two objectives can potentially be in conflict with one another. The best project proposals are usually developed by experienced capital-based NGOs that are already receiving funding from other donors and do not have significant capacity needs. CASE should be looking more at NGOs that are operating in the periphery, at community level. However, proposals by these NGOs might be lower in terms of quality and hence not make it through the rigid selection process.

Indeed, one participant noted, the requirements of the CASE programme may be challenging for entirely inexperienced NGOs to participate in the programme. One solution to this problem is to put the focus more on the quality of the project idea than on the formal correctness of a project proposal. One could call for project concepts, including a brief budget, rather than for fully-fledged proposals, and accompany selected CSOs through the broader project development process. This would serve to lower the requirements in terms of project-writing experience on part of interested CSOs. These less rigid criteria, coupled with closer support of NGOs would, however, increase the workload of CASE country teams, as more project concepts will be submitted and coaching and support needs to be intensified. All other things being equal this will lead to a lower number of projects being selected.

A second possible solution for the capacity dilemma as also mentioned in the CASE Guidelines is to encourage well-established and strong CSOs to partner with local CSOs and submit joint project proposals that would clearly delineate the contribution of each partner to project implementation. There is already one example of such partnership in Azerbaijan, where a Baku-based NGO will co-operate with three NGOs in Guba. Three out of seven projects in Azerbaijan are implemented by NGOs based outside the capital city. In Armenia, it was noted, the focus of project selection already lies on geographical decentralization and CSOs from the periphery are preferred all along.

The solution to the dilemma should in any case be a balanced approach to project selection that gives adequate weight to both the capacity-building and topical environment and security aspects of CASE. It would be best to select a mix of sound environment and security projects and projects delivered by lower-capacity CSOs addressing

priority topics in peripheral regions. This, of course would call for a qualitative approach to project selection. In any case a certain minimum level of capacity in terms of project management and reporting needs to be secured because CASE projects are OSCE projects and need to comply with the organization's reporting and accountability requirements.

Replication of successful CASE projects was another issue that was discussed in detail. As CASE winds down its first set of projects, the question arises whether there is a possibility for extension or replication of successful projects, and how this could be administered. Participants agreed that ways and means should be explored to replicate and/or expand successful projects. CASE co-ordination mechanisms at the country and regional levels should aim for bringing such projects to the attention of the government agencies and international organizations that could take up these projects and replicate them at a larger level.

The discussion subsequently turned to the **training and capacity building component of the CASE Programme**. It was mentioned that the experiences gained during the initial rounds of project selection and implementation have been instrumental in identification of training and capacity building needs. The trainings for the NGOs should address two major areas: (i) capacity building in project formulation, management, implementation, reporting and self-evaluation cover capacity building needs; and (ii) capacity building on environment and security linkages. It was underlined that regarding the first component expertise could be mobilized at the country level through existing partners such as UNDP and REC Caucasus, as well as leading national NGOs. Regarding the second component, it was underlined that such expertise could be provided by ENVSEC and ENVSEC Partners. Closer co-ordination with ENVSEC structures would also help anchor CASE more thoroughly in the initiative. CASE, together with the Aarhus Centres Initiative is an important element of ENVSEC's civil society dimension. Developing the civil society dimension of ENVSEC will be a priority also for the OSCE's Chairmanship of the Initiative in 2011. This increased attention to civil society should be beneficial for CASE as it expands its scope.

Participants subsequently discussed the **linkages CASE develops with partner organizations**. Again, the nature and extent of these linkages vary from country to country. The main partners for the CASE Initiative are the Aarhus Centres in the three countries of implementation. The CASE Programme with its focus on environmental awareness-raising and civil society capacity building integrates neatly into the work of Aarhus Centres.

In Armenia, with its dense network of 15 Aarhus Centres that work on all three pillars of the Convention – access to environmental information, participation in environmental decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters - the co-operation between CASE and the Aarhus Centres is very close. Many CASE-related events and CSO project activities are carried out in and through the Aarhus Centres. In Azerbaijan, Aarhus Centres provide the venues for meetings and outreach activities by CASE to the CSO community. In Tajikistan, the Aarhus Centres network is still expanding. There are three Aarhus Centres in Tajikistan and the Centre in Dushanbe has recently been handed over to the government. The work of these Centres focus on the first two pillars of the Convention - access to environmental information and public participation in decision-making. The OSCE Office in Tajikistan considers establishing a new Aarhus Centre in the remote Pamirs. One recently approved CASE project will provide the groundwork for establishing this new Aarhus Centre in the Gorno-Badakhstan Autonomous Province.

One priority category of partners for the CASE Programme that is increasingly being involved in CASE projects is the private sector. The private sector is an important partner on multiple levels. First, it acts as a major donor in Azerbaijan. Statoil Hydro is a major

donor of the CASE Programme in Azerbaijan and also serves on the CASE National Screening Board. More broadly, addressing environmental security priorities - and building an environmentally sustainable economic model – states will have to rely on private sector investment. Also, in their role as polluters in all three countries of CASE implementation, private companies in the industry and mining sectors need to be part of any comprehensive environmental solution. Aware of that, many CSO grantees submit and implement CASE projects in co-operation with the private sector in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. For the private sector also, partnership with CSOs yields benefits.

The final topic addressed in this session was the **success of CASE in reaching out to the civil society community in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan**. In all three countries, the OSCE field missions held CASE kick-off meetings and introductory events. Moreover, calls for proposals were in all cases published in major national newspapers. Armenia relied particularly on the Aarhus Centres Network for outreach. Information on the CASE programme was made available on the Aarhus Centre website. In Azerbaijan, two big outreach events were organized – in Baku and the north of the country. In Tajikistan, presentations on CASE were held at all OSCE field offices, involving OSCE field staff that spread the word about CASE among their civil society counterparts. This was regarded as an effective and low-cost means of reaching out to grassroots organizations.

One note of caution regarding outreach activities was voiced, however. Strong public outreach activities carry the risk of creating exaggerated expectations among CSOs. CASE might be confronted with CSO interest that it is unable to handle financially and administratively. Here it would be beneficial to develop partnerships with other donors in the countries, so good proposals that CASE cannot implement could be forwarded to partner organizations. In that way, other organizations on the ground could use CASE as a tool for outreach.

Session 3: The Way Forward

Chair: Mr. Marc Baltés, Deputy Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

This session focused on issues pertinent to the medium-term development of the CASE Programme. There was wide agreement among participants that an overall sound management structure was established in each country, and that the next step of the CASE Programme should not involve a change in setup or design, but continued implementation of the Programme in its current form until 2013. In this context, participants first discussed the **question of sustained resource mobilization for the CASE Programme**. In 2009 and 2010, a total of 250,000 EUR has been allocated to projects that are currently implemented and to-be implemented under CASE in all three countries. Many issues and challenges discussed in previous sessions, including the continuation and replication of successful projects, imply a requirement of increased financial resources. Significant fund-raising needs to take place in 2011 to fund the next cycle of implementation for the CASE Programme until 2013. The OSCE Secretariat will continue to promote CASE among OSCE delegations in Vienna and among ENVSEC partners. These efforts need to be matched at the country level. For this, CASE in each country would first need a clear indication of resource requirements for programme implementation in each country for the next three years. CASE NSBs in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan should develop a fund-raising strategy at their next meeting.

Fund-raising at the country level, CASE teams need to be aware of the linkages CASE has or could potentially develop. One should explore the possibility of linking CASE to European Commission and World Bank projects on the ground.

Other sources of funding might be country-specific and domestic. In Azerbaijan, for instance, the government instituted a National Council that finances NGO initiatives and CASE could explore opportunities for receiving complementary funds. Another option would be for CASE projects to be implemented as a component of bigger national or regional projects and receive funding through, for example, EU complementary grants. .

These efforts at securing the financial sustainability of CASE should be complemented with renewed activity on raising the **visibility of CASE**, and perhaps a first systematic stock-taking of CASE results in the form of **country-level self-evaluations** of CASE Armenia, CASE Azerbaijan, and CASE Tajikistan.

Efforts to enhance the visibility of the CASE Programme need to take place at project level, country level as well as at corporate level. Participants agreed that CASE needs to communicate its tangible results in a co-ordinated manner in 2011 to attract donor funding for the implementation phase of 2011-2013. Being able to present visible results will also be beneficial in the promotion of the CASE Programme in countries interested in joining the Initiative. At the corporate level, the OSCE will utilize its chairmanship of ENVSEC to present CASE more systematically at the ENVSEC Management Board meetings and the ENVSEC Donors Forum. In 2011, the 4th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in Chisinau, the Environment for Europe Conference in Astana and the preparatory conferences for the Rio+20 could offer the means to promote further the Aarhus Centres Initiative and the CASE Programme within the overall framework of the ENVSEC Initiative.

The OCEEA maintains **an updated project database for CASE**. The OCEEA will also consider engaging the OSCE's Press and Public Information Section in a CASE communications campaign.

At the country level, CASE results will be systematically collected and presented, including on the Armenia Aarhus Centres website, and on the websites of the OSCE Offices in Baku and Tajikistan. OSCE Offices in the three countries could also consider having a quarterly e-newsletter that summarizes the main events related to CASE implementation in the country.

Regarding CASE visibility and promotion at project level, it is difficult to implement a unitary approach. CASE teams from all three countries agreed that the OSCE's ownership of CASE and ENVSEC framework is always clear and well presented by CASE grantees. CASE grantees hold environmental exhibitions, take part in conferences and use CSO platforms to spread information about their projects supported by CASE. Many CASE projects also produce promotion material and TV footage on their activities for awareness-raising purpose. This footage could be valuable for promoting CASE at all levels.

Finally, participants turned to the overarching question of **CASE sustainability**. Participants remarked that to ensure the sustainability of CASE, all stakeholders needed to adopt a programmatic view of CASE. In 2011, to attain a clear perspective on the quality of CASE structures and work performed, OSCE field missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan will conduct a **systematic self-evaluation**. This evaluation should focus on both the projects supported and on CASE structures providing project selection and support, and determine how they have contributed to the realization of the CASE objectives. This evaluation is an opportunity also to produce success stories that could be used to promote CASE among donors. In this regard, it would be beneficial to look at the experience of the Aarhus Centres

that have undergone a comprehensive evaluation and have been able to more clearly define priorities as a result.

Wrap up and closure

In the closing session *Esra Buttanri*, *OCEEA* summarized the major themes of discussion at the CASE Co-ordination Meeting but also addressed topics that have not been conclusively addressed and that should nonetheless be discussed in routine interaction among CASE practitioners: These include the scoring techniques used in project selection, the frequency of NSB meetings, project monitoring and reporting, linkages of CASE with projects and programmes supported by governments and other international organizations.

Mr. Marc Baltés lauded the productive discussion at this meeting and emphasized that this meeting would lead to a further advancement of the CASE Programme until 2013 and beyond. He thanked all participants for their contribution, and representatives of OSCE participating States for their interest in the CASE Programme.

Attachments:

Agenda, List of Participants, meeting presentations as well as the list of CASE projects are available at http://www.osce.org/eea/item_6_48098.html