Fueling Change Through Green Energy Promotion in Kazakhstan

At present, Alen is working as a Procurement Assistant in a UNDP-GEF project on “Derisking Renewable Energy Investment,” which is connected with SDG #7: “Affordable and clean energy.” The significance of this project can be gauged from the fact that 40% of heat production in Kazakhstan is generated from centralized district heating systems that run on combined heat and power plants (typically coal-fired). The remaining heat is produced by heat-only boilers, which often have low efficiencies. The total power generation structure of Kazakhstan includes 69% power generated from coal-fired plants, 19% from gas, 2% from oil, 9% from hydropower plants, and less than 1% from renewables.

All these factors result in the fact that Kazakhstan is one of the largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters in Central Asia with annual emissions of 300.9 Mt CO$_2$eq in 2015. Furthermore, the large scale of the country and low population density in rural areas necessitate the development of additional transmission lines, whose maintenance will inevitably increase the energy cost.
Aware of the seriousness of this problem, Kazakhstan wants to make a shift to renewable energy sources, gradually increasing their contribution to 10% of the total energy mix by 2030 and 50% by 2050. The UNDP-GEF project “Derisking Renewable Energy Investment” supports this vision and promotes private sector investment in renewable energy in the country. The methodology looks at leveraging appropriate technologies, including wind and solar photovoltaic energy, and promoting the latest business and finance models for small-scale renewable energy sources (RES) developers. By creating an impact on both the large scale and the small scale, the long-term goal of the project is to transform the energy market in Kazakhstan.

As part of the project, Kuspanov’s responsibilities include: drafting official documents/letters, organization and creation of events/meetings, negotiation with partners, local authorities and mass media, managing volunteers, collecting and researching data, conducting procurement/inviting tenders for the organization, etc. He counts his experience of participating in the Second Central Asian Research Forum on Sustainable Development and Innovation, held at Loughborough University in March 2019, to be particularly satisfactory. At the forum, he presented the results of the project and spoke about the value of young volunteers in local environment development.

“My participation in the forum was made possible due to the UNV learning allowance, which is a great opportunity for UN Volunteers to increase their knowledge and showcase their presentation skills. Through this and other events, I have learned multi-tasking and flexibility in dealing with different people at work, including government representatives and donors. -- Alen Kuspanov, Procurement Assistant, UNDP-GEF Project “Derisking Renewable Energy Investment,” Kazakhstan
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- renewable energy

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy