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From Targets to Results: Scaling up Support for Clean Air in Europe and Central Asia

September 14, 2023 | 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. EDT | [Webex](#)

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In the past decade, the World Bank's support to improve air quality in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region has grown exponentially. Nearly \$800 million is being planned to be invested under air quality management (AQM) projects across the region. Behind this impressive growth lies a story of strong analytics, robust collaboration with client countries and across sectors, and integrated solutions to achieve impactful economic, environmental, and climate action outcomes.

Yet, the path from robust AQM analytics and ambitious targets to results can be fraught with challenges, uncertainties, and tradeoffs. Organized by the World Bank's Environment, Natural Resources, and Blue Economy (ENB); Energy and Extractives; Transport; and Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practices in [ECA](#), this learning event marks the [U.N. International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies](#). It showcases some of the World Bank's projects in the ECA region and presents progress, lessons learned, challenges, and opportunities in scaling up support for clean air from targets to results.

Welcome:

- **Event Chair and Welcome:** Sameh Wahba, Regional Director for Sustainable Development, Europe and Central Asia, World Bank

- **Moderator: Sameer Akbar** Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank

Presentations:

- *Status, Plans, and Activities to Improve Air Quality in Serbia*
Sandra Dokić, State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia
- *Air Quality Management in Türkiye: Opportunities and Challenges*
İRde Çetintürk Gürtepe, Head of Air Quality Management Department, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye
- *Preparing a Multifaceted and Multisectoral Air Quality Project: Experiences from Bosnia and Herzegovina*
Esma Kreso, Senior Environmental Specialist, **Yuriy Myroshnychenko**, Senior Energy Specialist, and **Wenyu Jia**, Senior Urban Transport Specialist, World Bank
- *Air Quality in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities*
Kirtan Sahoo, Senior Climate Change Specialist and **Tamara Babayan**, Senior Energy Specialist, World Bank
- *Scaling and Partnering Up to Support Cleaner Air in Poland*
Reena C. Badiani-Magnusson, Program Leader and Senior Economist, World Bank

Discussants:

- **Christophe Crepin**, Practice Manager, ENB South Asia, World Bank
- **Joseph Akpokodje**, Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank

Q&A:

Moderated by: Sameer Akbar Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank

Closing Remarks:

Sanjay Srivastava, Practice Manager, ENB Europe and Central Asia, World Bank

About the Speakers:



Sameh Wahba is Regional Director for Sustainable Development at the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia region. He oversees the formulation of the Bank's strategy and engagements, and all Bank lending, technical assistance, partnerships, and policy advisory work in sustainable development. This includes agriculture and food; climate change; environment, natural resources and the blue economy; social inclusion and sustainability; water; and urban, disaster risk management, resilience, and land. He oversees a portfolio of close to \$10bn in lending commitments and a team of 200 sustainable development staff, based in DC and in 23 regional offices. He has over 25 years' experience in urban development, land and housing, infrastructure, and sustainable development.

Prior to the current position, Sameh served as Global Director of the World Bank's Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience, and Land Global Practice, which covered territorial development, geospatial, and results-based-financing and included an overall team of 450 professionals. He held several director and manager level positions at the global level and in Africa and worked as Sustainable Development Sector Leader for Brazil and as an urban specialist in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the Middle East and North Africa Regions where he led operations and policy dialogue on housing, land, local economic development, municipal management, and service delivery. Prior to joining the Bank in 2004, Sameh worked at the Institute of Housing and Urban Development Studies in Rotterdam and at the Harvard Center for Urban Development Studies. He holds a Ph.D. and a master's degree in urban planning from Harvard University, and a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Architectural Engineering from Cairo University. He has authored numerous book chapters, articles in peer reviewed journals, and op-eds. Sameh is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Cities Council, and sits on the boards for Cities Alliance, Resilient Cities Network and the WRI Ross Center for Cities.



Sameer Akbar is Senior Environmental Specialist with the World Bank's Environment, Natural Resources, and Blue Economy (ENB) Global Practice in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region and Coordinator of ECA Air Quality Thematic Group. Based in Vienna, he coordinates the activities of the ENB team in the Western Balkans. Since joining the Bank in 1998, he has worked on issues of corporate priority as well as in operations in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In the ECA region since 2019, Sameer has worked on projects and policy reforms in the areas of clean air, land remediation, circular economy, green growth, and climate mitigation and adaptation. Over the years, he has also contributed extensively to analytical work at the World Bank and provided advisory services to a number of client countries.

Sameer is an engineer by training and holds a PhD in environmental health and public policy from Imperial College in the UK.



Sandra Dokić is State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia. Prior to the current role, she served as Assistant Minister for Environmental Protection and as a GEF Operational Focal Point for Serbia, and held the position of Secretary-General in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism, and Telecommunication. Ms. Dokić is National Project Director for the Second Biennial Update Report and Third National Communication to the UNFCCC of the Republic of Serbia and for the Capacity Development for Improved Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Ms. Dokić is a member of the Committee and the member of the Bureau in UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP).

Ms. Dokić is a graduate of the University of Belgrade Faculty of Law and has been admitted to the bar. She has completed her master's studies at the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Economics and holds a master's degree in Economic Policy and Development, a second-cycle degree program.



Irde Çetintürk Gürtepe is Head of Air Quality Management Department at the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye. Previously, she held the position of Manager of Air Quality Management Division and Expert and Deputy Expert at the then-named Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye. She has extensive professional expertise in best available techniques, clean production, solid fuels, micromobility, emission management, and air quality modeling and mapping. Additionally, she has played a leading role in the preparation of the National Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory for the Republic of Türkiye.

Ms. Gürtepe has received a B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in chemical engineering and is currently completing her PhD study in environmental engineering.



Esma Kreso is a Senior Environmental Specialist with the World Bank's Environment, Natural Resources, and Blue Economy (ENB) Global Practice in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Esma is currently co-leading the air quality project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, alongside colleagues from the Transport and Energy sectors, presenting a cross-cutting approach to improving air quality with a focus on reduction of PM 2.5 from transport and winter-time domestic heating coupled with improved monitoring and management. Esma has substantial experience in World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) across the countries of the Western Balkans and across a wide array of development topics. In the past Esma has also contributed to analytical work on sustainability of the mining practices in Armenia, and the Air Quality across the Western Balkans.

Esma is an environmental engineer by training and holds a BSc degree from Michigan Technological University along with an MA from the London Metropolitan University in Tourism in Protected Areas.



Wenyu Jia is Senior Urban Transport Specialist with the World Bank based in Europe and Central Asia (ECA). Previously, she worked in East Africa and Southern Africa and Ethiopia. She has over 20 years of practical experience in urban transport. Prior to joining the Bank, Wenyu worked with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority as the Manager of Systems and Capital Planning and is able to combine the service provider insights into the development agenda. With an advanced degree from University of California – Berkeley and experience working on roads and railways and specifically on urban transit and urban mobility this is the first time that Wenyu is looking at the actual investments in urban mobility enhancements through the air quality prism. She also brings forward past experience in working and publishing on urban mobility and clean air in Ethiopia. Wenyu is the co-TTL for

the Bosnia and Herzegovina Air Quality Improvement Project, focused on advancing urban mobility, specifically improvements of the bike paths in the urban area of Sarajevo, along with lowering emissions of the public transport bus fleet and piloting the use of e-bus. Wenyu will also actively contribute to the concept of low emission zones in the urban core of Sarajevo.



Yuriy Myroshnychenko is a Senior Energy Specialist with the World Bank. He has over 20 years of experience in energy, working in the Oil, Gas and Mining unit in the East Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and ECA regions. With experience in the energy sector, including alternative energy sources such as solar, working with the power supply utilities, and being actively involved in the Just Transition process, Yuriy is now the co-TTL of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Air Quality Project, which brings together energy, environment and transport into one PDO. The energy part is specifically focusing on lowering emissions from single family households across the participating regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is essential, given that the over 60% of PM 2.5 emissions are attributed to winter-time heating and that more than a third of the population of Sarajevo are using solid fuels for heating.



Kirtan Sahoo is Senior Climate Change Specialist at the World Bank's Environment, Natural Resources, and Blue Economy (ENB) Global Practice in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region. He is currently leading several important engagements in the areas of environment and climate change such as development of long-term decarbonization strategies; implementation of carbon pricing policies; promotion of the circular economy; and design of investments for improved air quality in many countries in the Central Asia region. Additionally, Kirtan has worked extensively on energy, environment, and climate change cross-cutting issues in several countries in South Asia, Africa, and East Asia. He has broad experience in developing climate/carbon finance transactions and managing carbon funds, and has recently performed the role of Regional Climate Champion for the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region to coordinate mainstreaming of climate change considerations in Bank engagements in the EAP region. Prior to joining the Bank in 2004, Kirtan worked in the Environment Management and Decentralized Infrastructure Unit of Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC) in India, a company that finances infrastructure projects, primarily developed by the private sector.

He holds a master's degree in Physics from Hyderabad Central University; an MTech in Atmospheric Science and Technology from Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur; and was a Senior Research Fellow at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. He also studied Environmental Management at the University of Manchester as a British Chevening Fellow.



Tamara Babayan is Senior Energy Specialist with the World Bank's Energy and Extractive's Global Practice in the ECA region. She is a seasoned expert in sustainable energy policy, planning, technology, and finance. She is experienced in design and implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, and development of financing mechanisms for renewable energy investments and for energy efficiency in public and residential buildings. In her current role, Tamara Babayan has been involved in energy dialogue, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and carbon pricing projects in Bulgaria, Central Asia, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, and in the Western Balkan countries.

Tamara is a skilled project manager with about 20 years of experience and portfolio of projects in heating, energy efficiency, small hydro, geothermal, solar PV area, working with governments, communities, private sector, local and international financial institutions, academia and civil society. Before joining the World Bank, Tamara led the Armenia Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund (R2E2) for 12 years and served as a consultant for international organizations (ADB, AFD, EBRD, EIB, EU, WBG, UNDP/GCF) and as a Technical Advisory Group expert of ESMAP and CIFs Strategic Climate Fund Committee and as a SREP Sub-Committee member for several rounds.

Tamara graduated from the Yerevan State University with a degree in physics and holds a master's degree in public administration.



Reena C. Badiani-Magnusson is Program Leader and Senior Economist at the World Bank. She has worked on social protection, human development and poverty issues for more than a decade at the World Bank in several countries across Europe and Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific and Africa. Reena holds a PhD from the Department of Economics at Yale University. Additionally, she holds a Masters in Environmental Economics from the MPSE in Toulouse University.



Christophe Crepin is Practice Manager in the South Asia Region Vice Presidency for the Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy Global Practice. He joined the Bank in 1998 as a Coordinator in the Environment Sector in Africa. He has since held various positions, including Lead Environmental Specialist and Program Manager of key environment programs in Africa, as well as Lead Environmental Specialist and Sector Leader in the East Asia and Pacific region. Before moving to the South Asia region, he was Practice Manager covering Vietnam, Philippines and Southeast Asia for the Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy Global Practice.

Before joining the Bank, Christophe was a program manager at the French Development Agency. He started as a program leader and regional coordinator at the International Center for Research and Development. He holds a Ph.D. in veterinary science from the Université Pantheon-Sorbonne in Paris as well as a degree in public policy and economics, majoring in development economics, from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris.



Joseph Akpokodje, a Nigerian national, joined the World Bank Group in 2005 and currently holds the position of Senior Environmental Specialist with the Environmental, Natural Resources and Blue Economy Global Practice in the South Asia Region. Based in New Delhi, he has led a range of operations in Environment, Natural Resources; Climate Change; and Urban, Disaster Risk Management, and Resilience Global Practices as well as sector and policy dialogue across many countries in Africa and South Asia. Prior to joining the Bank, he consulted for several international donor agencies including EU, DFID, African Development Bank, UN system, national governments and academia. Joseph also served as a researcher and senior researcher at the Center for Criminal Justice Economics and Psychology, University of York, UK. He received his undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and a graduate degree in Environmental Economics from the University of York, UK.



Sanjay Srivastava is Practice Manager for the Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy (ENB) Global Practice for Europe and Central Asia (ECA). He leads a large team and Bank's engagement in lending and advisory support to promote green growth, nature-based solutions, biodiversity and forest conservation, growing the blue economy, as well as managing environmental risks across the Bank's lending operation. Previously, he served as Practice Manager for ENB in West and Central Africa. Sanjay brings vast global experience in devising environmental strategy and policy dialogue related to sustainable development, as well as hands-on experience supporting complex environmental interventions in several developing countries. He is a trained environmental engineer and a global leader in sustainable development with more than 30 years of applied international experience, including 18 years in Africa and South Asia region. Prior to joining the Bank, Sanjay worked in the private sector (natural resource management consulting), the public sector (environmental research utility), for a bilateral donor (clean technology financing), and a non-governmental organization (conservation advocacy).

This learning event is organized by the World Bank's [Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy \(ENB\) Global Practice](#) in ECA; and [Energy; Transport](#); and [Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land](#) Global Practices in ECA, which work to eliminate poverty and boost shared prosperity through enabling markets, developing productive individuals, and building solid foundations for resilience. For more information regarding this event, please contact Nigara Abate at nabate@worldbank.org.
