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The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) is an independent, non-profit, non-political, international organisation assisting the Central Asian governments, regional and international stakeholders in addressing environmental and sustainability challenges across Central Asia

Capacity building, distribution, knowledge sharing, researches, which build bridges between water management specialists and scientific community in Central Asia and Afghanistan

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

- Started in October 2015 to promote USAID Central Asia regional mission's goal to enhance regional cooperation on shared water resources;
- The main objectives of the project are: a) to address the knowledge dis-lock in the region in water sector; b) to build working relations among water management specialists c) to demonstrate the potential of the basin management approach and cooperation with academia;
- Implementing organization: CAREC;
- Duration of the project: 5 years, until 2020;
- Being implemented in five Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

To meet main goals, CAREC implements the project through the following components:

1. Capacity Building & Academic Exchange.
2. Networking & Cooperation.
3. IWRM Promotion & Support.
4. Basin Planning.

The Smart Waters project serves as a platform for linking countries within Central Asia and Central Asian countries with Afghanistan by creating a network of like-minded water management specialists and policy makers across multiple levels and countries in the region. In addition, it will connect policy-level water management discussions and practical, on-the-ground implications expanding opportunities for water management specialists, students, researchers, policy makers, and end users to network and share information.

[Learn more here](#)

First regional meeting – first project steps

At the beginning of March 2016, Almaty hosted the first regional meeting on the project. During the meeting, participants discussed the concept of execution of four

project components, and suggested steps for further implementation in the coming year.

GEORGE DEIKUN, *Regional Mission Director for Central Asia at USAID*, shared his opinion on Afghanistan's entry to the project:

«Most importantly, this initiative is joined by Afghanistan. This is the first time in history, when Central Asia has expanded its borders, because they share a common system of water resources management. This program focuses on capacity building in accordance with national priorities, involves students in the development of a common regional platform for the exchange of information among countries. All activities of the project contribute to solving problems related to water scarcity, which can be experienced in the region in the future».

Presentation of the project in Afghanistan

June 5, 2016, the Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan held a presentation on the project for national partners. The representatives of country ministries and departments, higher education and several international

organizations attended the event and discussed main activities of the project and the implementation of a roadmap for coming years.

The cooperation of Afghanistan and Central Asian countries is a key factor in protecting the environment, management of shared water resources and struggle with climate change. This project will make a significant contribution to the promotion of dialogue in the region, where Afghanistan is a part of it geographically. It will strengthen cooperation between neighbors, and build capacity in the field of integrated water resources management (IWRM) by raising the level of education.

[Learn more here](#)

SEMINAR-TRAINING «Technologies and methods of state control over rational use and protection of water resources»

In April 2016, Almaty hosted a seminar entitled “Technologies and methods of state control over rational use and protection of water resources”. The main objectives of the workshop was a familiarization with the

legal aspects of state regulation of water-related activities, including the issues of state control over rational use and protection of water resources, compliance with legislation on different water issues.

*Deputy Director of Executive Committee of International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) in Kazakhstan, **AMIRHAN KENSHIMOV**, in his opening speech emphasized the gap between preparation of water management specialists and needs of the labor market in Kazakhstan, noting the particular need for an active connection between science, education and manufactures.*

Exchange of experience between Water Users Associations (WUAs), Afghanistan and Tajikistan

May 16, 2016, Dushanbe for the first time hosted a joint training seminar on exchange of experience in the management of water resources and support for WUAs of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The OSCE Office in Dushanbe, Mercy Corps of Afghanistan and CAREC organized it within the framework of Smart Waters project.

The seminar highlighted several aspects of the WUAs such as legal framework, planning of water resources management, evaluation of water consumption for crops, water management technologies.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee

June 22, 2016, Almaty hosted the first meeting of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the project. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Central Asia and Afghanistan. The participants discussed the agreement on composition of RSC and its work, presented interim results of a needs assessment in the participating countries and work plan for the second half of 2016.

The following basins have been chosen for the project work:

- *Kurkureu Su river basin between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*
- *Basin of Ak-Suu and Isfana rivers between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (subject to agreement of the Republic of Tajikistan for the unification of the two basins)*
- *Continued work in Aspara river basin between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*
- *Continued work in Isfara river basin between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*

CAREC flagship – the Seventh Central Asian Leadership Programme

September 19-27, 2016, CAREC in cooperation with UNEP, the Government of Norway, the Programme of the OSCE Office in Astana, USAID, and the European Union held the Seventh Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development. Young specialists from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have arrived in Almaty for participation, along with international experts, representatives of the Foreign Ministries and parliamentarians from Central Asia.

In 2016, special attention was paid to the regional cooperation on water issues, achievements of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Central Asia, rational use of water resources, green development, climate change and sustainable energy.

[Learn more here](#)

New publications on water management in Central Asia

Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg published the article by **I. Abdullayev** and **S. Rakhmatullaev** – «*River basin management in Central Asia: evidence from Isfara Basin, Fergana Valley*».

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