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The second meeting of the Regional Steering Committee, 7 June 2018, Tashkent

MEETING SUMMARY

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the European Union (EU) Nexus Central Asia (CA) Dialogue Project dedicated its second meeting to the development of investment projects to foster water, energy and food security in CA.

The meeting was attended by the RSC members from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan whose appointments have been formally notified, potential RSC members from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as observers from Kyrgyzstan.



In total, thirty participants from five Central Asian States, including the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS), basin and regional organizations, national ministries and agencies responsible for water, land management, energy and economic development attended the meeting. For details, please see the attached List of Participants (Annex I).

The meeting was opened with welcoming remarks by Ms Shakhnoza Umarova, Director of CAREC Country Office in Uzbekistan, Mr Serdar Eyebenov, Turkmenistan's official representative in EC IFAS, and Mr Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Cooperation Section, European Union Delegation to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

RSC members and other participants considered the Senegal River Basin experience of regional cooperation and reviewed the progress made in identifying regional priorities that foster water, energy and food (WEF) security in Central Asia, including the benefits for all countries. Preliminary results of an analysis of institutional gaps in multi-sector investment planning, particularly in the Action Program to assist the countries of the Aral Sea basin (ASBP-4) planning process, were also discussed. The regional deliberation of WEF Nexus-based investment project ideas proposed by Central Asian countries started with the presentation of eight project ideas proposed by the members of Intersectoral Working Groups (ISWG) of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Session 1 provided an overview of recent developments in the ASBP-4 programming process and the EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project.



Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC, presented the latest developments and plans, notably contributions to the Draft Concept on development of the ASBP-4 in terms of WEF Nexus-based criteria for selection of investment projects. Mr Serdar Eyebenov presented the ASBP-4 recent and future developments as a regional cooperation programme with the involvement of the international donor community for improving the ecological and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin and achieving water, energy and food security in the region, while considering the interests of all Central Asian countries.

During **Session 2** the experience of cooperation among the Senegal Basin riparian countries, presented by Mr Vokhidzhon Akhmadzhonov, representative of the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan,

was discussed. This practical example of uniting riparian countries in the joint management of common infrastructure and assets and resulting benefits at macro level was very useful for the members of the RSC involved in the development of ASBP-4 and the institutional strengthening of IFAS.

Initial ideas of WEF Nexus-based investment projects, proposed by Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, were presented by Ms Zukhro Mukhtorova, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Mr Igor Naumov, EC IFAS Secretariat, Turkmenistan, respectively. Further steps towards the identification and formulation of cross-sectoral investment projects tackling issues of regional or transboundary importance were discussed. It was agreed that the project team will continue working with CA countries to identify project ideas of regional or transboundary importance. In particular, it was suggested that an expert with international experience could be hired to prepare proposals for projects of regional importance, following the example of the Senegal River Basin management.

Despite differences in the systems of national investment planning, all countries' interventions stressed the need to enhance the capacity of the members of the national ISWG and the RSC to facilitate the development and identification of priority investment projects, as well the assessment of the bankability and other investment criteria.

Session 3 focused on the preliminary results of an institutional gaps analysis for cooperative investment planning across sectors in Central Asia, carried out by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Ms Kristin Meyer, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Coordinator from IUCN, presented challenges related to institutional capacities, planning and budgetary processes based on data from interviews with key stakeholders. She also mentioned the prevalence of the water sector, particularly in the ASBP planning process. Political and institutional factors, low levels of mutual understanding and trust, a lack of knowledge, institutional and technical capacities, as well as a need for more open data and information exchange were identified by interview respondents as major factors preventing multi-sectoral dialogue for the planning of Water-Energy-Food investment projects at regional level in Central Asia.



The RSC members agreed to make the first selection of regional multi-sectoral investment projects at the third RSC meeting, early October, 2018, in the lead of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Convention (10-12 October 2018, Astana, Kazakhstan). It was also agreed to speed up the process of nominating the RSC members in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The meeting concluded with closing remarks by Mr Johannes Stenbaek Madsen (EU DEL Kazakhstan), Ludmilla Kiktenko (CAREC) and Mr Serdar Eyebenov (EC IFAS).



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The Meeting of the Nexus Regional Steering Committee

7 June 2018 | Tashkent, Uzbekistan | Hayat hotel, «Bukhara» conference hall

List of participants

PERMANENT MEMBERS OF RSC

№	Name	Position	Contacts
1.	EC IFAS	Serdar Eyeberenov (instead of Guzgeldy Baidjanov)	Chairmen of The Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea Serdaar05@mail.ru
2.	Uzbekistan	Kamol Kuchkarov	Ministry of Water Resources in the Republic of Uzbekistan, Deputy Head of the Management Department for Water Use and Development of Water-Saving Technologies
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4.	Tajikistan	Zukhro Mukhtorova	Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, Department of agriculture and environmental protection, Head of the Department of Agriculture Development and Environmental Protection Zuhro.64@mail.ru
5.	Turkmenistan	Igor Naumov	National Coordinator of Nexus Project in Turkmenistan, The Secretariat of EC IFAS +993 12 22-32-35 igornaumov1955@mail.ru

6.	EC IFAS	Bolat Bekniyaz	Director of The Executive Board of the IFAS of the Republic of Kazakhstan	bbolat@mail.ru
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