



The Project is funded by the European Union, implemented by CAREC in cooperation with IUCN, supported by EC IFAS

The Fourth Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee 18-19 June 2019, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

MEETING SUMMARY

The Fourth Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project (the "Nexus Project") was convened to take stock of the Project's results to date, to share lessons learnt from a recent study tour to the Danube and Sava River Basins Commissions, and to discuss transboundary investment project ideas meeting the Nexus criteria that might be further supported under the Nexus Phase II (see the Meeting Agenda in Annex 1).



The Meeting was attended by 11 nominated members of the RSC from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as representatives of the European Union Delegations to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, representatives of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and experts engaged by the Nexus Project. In total, there were about thirty participants (27% female) from all five Central Asian countries (see the list of participants in Annex 2).

The meeting was opened with welcoming speeches by **Mr Shaimzoda Djamshed**, First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan, **Mr Emil Dankov**, Project Manager, EU Delegation to Tajikistan, **Mr Vaysidin Saidov**, CAREC Country Office Director and the Nexus Project Coordinator in Tajikistan and **Mr Serdar Eyeberenov**, Representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.



During Session 1 the progress and results achieved by the Nexus Project since the last meeting of the RSC on 12 October 2018 in Astana (current Nur-Sultan) were presented by **Ms Lyudmila Kiktenko**, Manager of the Nexus Project. She informed the RSC members that most of the tasks given to the Nexus Project team at the last RSC meeting had been completed.

Ms Kristin Meyer, the Nexus Project Coordinator at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), presented the results of her analysis on institutional development and capacity building for multi-sectoral investment planning, as well as some preliminary recommendations and draft Nexus Roadmap for Central Asia. She presented the key and most urgent recommendations derived from the survey on institutional gaps and data from the capacity scorecard. She noted the importance of capacity building

interventions to bring the region up-to-speed regarding the Nexus approach in planning and decision-making; the critical role of data sharing to strengthening regional platforms; and the need for pilot projects to demonstrate Nexus applications in Central Asia as a first step to move from “concept” to “action”. Country specific interventions should be used to showcase different tools and strategies tailored to the Nexus problems under consideration in the given context.

Mr Serdar Eyeberenov noted that it would be advisable to make use of the tools and methods developed by WECOOP and CAWEP to further elaborate the investment project ideas developed by the Nexus Project. **Mr Vokhidjon Akhmadjonov**, Chief of the Information and Analysis Resource Center under the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan, inquired about the best cases of the Nexus approach application. He suggested that information on all sectors involved and the benefits derived from multi-sectoral planning should be included in the investment project descriptions. He also proposed to develop clear recommendations on concrete steps to fill the existing institutional capacity gaps based on the reports done by IUCN. **Mr Sagit Ibatullin**, a regional expert of the Nexus Project, noted that the Nexus Roadmap presented by IUCN does not yet include any specific timeframe, implementation mechanisms and detailed actions. **Ms Meyer Kristin** explained that the Roadmap was developed quite recently, at the training workshop conducted as part of the study tour in May 2019, and will be further developed within the Phase 2 of the Global Nexus Dialogues Programme.

A political will was a matter of common concern, as any activity at the regional level requires high-level political support to be properly and timely implemented. It was noted, however, that the RSC, whose members were nominated by the countries, represents a good indication of the political support for the Nexus Project and its goals. **Mr Vokhidjon Akhmadjonov** mentioned that a lot depends on country experts and the RSC members should follow an iterative approach of promoting Nexus vision at the highest level.

Mr Rustam Issakhojayev, an expert of the Nexus Project, presented the overview of the Policy Briefs, training modules and investment projects selection methodology. It was noted that the Policy Brief entitled “From *idea to shared benefits*” which will be finalized by the end of July 2019, will provide theoretical explanation of how the Nexus concept can be incorporated into planning processes and what selection criteria should be used. He also noted that the investment projects selection methodology makes reference to the Investor’s Guide¹ developed under the EU-funded Project “Regional Coordination and Support for the EU-Central Asia Enhanced Regional Cooperation on Environment, Climate Change and Water (WECOOP),” which is a useful tool to further elaborate the Nexus project ideas in line with IFIs requirements.

Current status and expected results of Nexus Pilot Projects were presented during **Session 2**. Participants noted the importance of piloting the Nexus approach and that the presented pilot projects are applicable to other countries of the region since they often share similar geographical characteristics. **Ms Aksulu Kushanova**, an expert of the Nexus Project, shared the outcomes of the informal technical consultations held in February and March 2019 to support the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan (current Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan) in its efforts to resume the regional dialogue on the establishment of a Water and Energy Consortium in Central Asia following the statement of the First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev (during the meeting of the Council of Heads of State Founders of IFAS in Turkmenbashi, August 24, 2018). **Mr Daniyar Sharip**, Chief Expert, Department for Transboundary Rivers of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, called for regional cooperation on resuming this dialogue and confirmed the Ministry’s readiness to take the lead in implementing this initiative.



On the Nexus pilot project in Tajikistan presented by **Mr Rustam Abdullaev**, a number of regional experts informed that similar work had been done in other Central Asian states and it is important that outcomes of those expert works are also considered when formulating the water reservoirs exploitation methodology and regulations. It was also suggested that the draft methodology is shared with other Central Asian countries, since some of the water reservoirs are of an intrastate importance. The Nexus pilot project on improving the system for control and electricity consumption monitoring of the pumping stations in Uzbekistan, presented

¹ <http://www.wecoop2.eu/ru/useful-resources/investor-guide>

by **Mr Vokhidjon Akhmadjonov** was also widely discussed and supported by the meeting participants, highlighting its overall applicability in the region. Moreover, other countries indicated the need to have similar projects in their respective countries. Preliminary deliverables under Nexus pilot projects showed a good implementation progress achieved. **Mr Batyr Kurbanov**, Member of the Regional Expert Group, the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, presented the pilot project focusing on the sardob² reconstruction at the “Eseneman land plot” in Turkmenistan. The project is jointly implemented with UNDP and is intended to enable cattle breeding and land restoration. Participants of the meeting noted that similar techniques are used by the farmers of the remote and arid territories across Central Asia.

It was noted that all presented projects should be finalized this autumn and their results showcased at the Final Conference. The Nexus Project team was requested to work closely with the national experts on this matter and ensure timely exchange of information. Given the lengthy national consultation process, the contract for the pilot project with Tajikistan has been extended until October 2019.

Ms Aksulu Kushanova presented the background information and provided an overview of the transboundary river management approaches applied in the two basins visited during the study tour to the Danube and Sava River Basins organized on 11-19 May 2019 in Vienna, Austria, and Zagreb, Croatia, with participation of 17 representatives of Central Asia. Participants of the study tour from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and regional organizations also contributed to the general discussion by sharing lessons learned. Speakers noted that the most important lesson learned during the tour was that trust is a fundamental element for cooperation and solving transboundary problems. Additionally, the availability of the budget, legal framework and well-established institutional structure were highlighted as key drivers for the basin management success. The study tour participants voiced the following recommendations: i) consider expanding the mandate of IFAS; ii) develop a financing mechanism for water related activities; iii) celebrate Aral Sea Basin days similarly to Danube and Sava Days; iv) revive the flood irrigation system and v) respect the needs of all riparian countries.

Day 2 of the Meeting focused on the portfolio of investment project ideas presented and discussed in **Session 3** chaired by **Mr Sagit Ibatullin**. The promoters of the project ideas provided an overview of their project ideas, responded to questions and took note of the comments provided by the RSC participants to elaborate them further and finalize for the Final Conference.

The following project ideas were presented:

- Project 1.1 “Modernization and introduction of SCADA in the Syrdarya Basin”;
- Project 1.3 “Dam Safety and other Hydrotechnical Facilities (HTFs) in Central Asia: Development of the Potential and the Regional Cooperation”;
- Project 1.4 “Improvement of the water resources in the Amudarya River Basin through the rehabilitation and modernization of the water facilities and interstate legislative framework”;
- Project 2.1 “Rehabilitation of the Aral Sea ecosystem to combat desertification and land degradation”;
- Project 3.1 “Sustainable water and energy supply in rural areas of Central Asia”;
- Project 3.2 “Integrated development of eco-and agro-tourism with elements of ethno-tourism in protected natural areas in the Aral Sea Basin”.

The following points of concern were received from the members of the RSC during this session:

- All investment project ideas should clearly show the Nexus approach;
- Country level support should be received since the political will is a defining factor for IFIs to step in. The commitment of the CA states involved in a particular project needs to be assessed, especially in relation to inter-governmental cooperation, in order to ascertain the feasibility of proposed projects;
- Detailed assessment of the current state of the facilities to be renovated/modernized should be done to understand how upgrading those facilities would affect the region;
- Sustainability of results should be considered and ensured;
- Considering the possible effect of these interventions on Afghanistan, it is recommended to also include it during the planning process;

² Traditional water reservoir for rainwater harvesting in deserts for animal breeding and other household use

- Each project should aim to address some intergovernmental issues. Socio-economic benefits of projects should be clearly defined and presented;
- It is important to communicate with other regional IFIs to pinpoint the possibility of joint support for the project ideas;
- Proper and well-defined financing mechanisms should be suggested. PPP should not be neglected when formulating (finalizing) the project ideas;
- The best available and feasible for the specific intervention technology should be considered when solving existing problems;
- In all transboundary matters related to shared natural resources, representatives of hydrometeorological state agencies should also be involved, since they have all the necessary statistical data;
- To consider non-traditional approaches to manage the hydro facilities as a business.

Mr Rustam Abdullaev requested the Nexus Project team to share the investment project ideas portfolio via official channels for internal review and endorsement in line with the formal procedures.

Mr Shukrat Talipov, a national expert of the Nexus Project, invited the Nexus Project team to participate in the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment which will be held in Tashkent in September. **Ms Lyudmila Kiktenko** noted that the Project team had been in touch with SPECA organizers on this matter and will continue to work in this direction.

During **Session 4**, **Ms Lyudmila Kiktenko** presented the draft agenda of the Final Conference. She informed the participants of the tentative dates, location and format, with detailed explanation of the objective of the event and how the Project team aims to achieve them.

Mr Serdar Eyeberenov suggested to organize the Final Conference in Ashgabat, but could not propose any specific date(s). Due to the time constraints and the need for better planning, it was requested that EC IFAS should inform the Nexus Project team about the date of the ASBP-4 Conference in Ashgabat by the end of August 2019. Alternatively, Almaty could be considered as a location for the High-Level Final Conference, with tentative dates being last week of November. Participants also provided some comments on the proposed format of the Conference and suggested to focus more on the tangible results and investment project ideas.



Mr Sagit Ibatullin proposed to consider the Chu-Talas River Basin Commission as a pilot project for the transboundary water cooperation on WEF principals with two participating states (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) deriving joint benefits from the shared practice with joint funding on the maintenance.

Mr Vokhidjon Akhmadjonov suggested that well-developed case studies showcasing the use of Nexus approach and their applicability for Central Asia are essential for further promoting this approach in the region. He suggested that the cases of the Senegal River Basin located in West Africa and the Parana (Lago Itaipu) River located in South America shall be included in such study and presented in the form of a brochure on Nexus best practices and case studies for presentation at the Final Conference.

The project promoters requested the donor and implementing partners (CAREC and IUCN) to share their vision of the next steps to take the projects up to the next level. A concern was expressed with regards to the financing options, given the fact that all the proposed project ideas are regional in scope. Hence, the distribution of credits between borrowing countries may be an issue. The IFIs' representatives noted that they would need to receive an official letter with the request for a loan from the Ministry of Finance of interested countries. CASA1000 was mentioned as a good example of a regional project with loans given to individual countries involved in the project.

CONCLUSIONS

The Fourth RSC Meeting proved to be an intense and fruitful meeting during which national and regional project stakeholders could discuss the progress and next steps for the implementation of Nexus Project.

The following actions to be taken before the end of the Project in December 2019 were identified as follows:

- Investment project ideas portfolio to be send to Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Project countries

with a request to provide an expression of interest to develop the proposed projects (July); Letters of interest from CA countries received (end of July); Final portfolio of the investment project ideas formed (August);

- Pilot projects: Final reports and deliverables to be received (end of September); Visibility products to be developed (end of September);
- Training modules: Final draft of the training module materials to be prepared (end of September);
- Two Policy Briefs: Final drafts to be developed (end of July);
- IUCN reports: All reports to be finalized and submitted to the Contracting Authority (EU Delegation to Kazakhstan) for review and comments (15 July);
- Final Conference: Date and location to be identified (end of August); Invitation letters to be sent (early September).

Attachment 1: Meeting Agenda



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Central Asia Nexus Dialogue Project: Fostering Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus Dialogue and Multi-Sector Investment in Central Asia

Fourth Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee

18-19 June 2019 | Dushanbe, Tajikistan | Hilton Dushanbe Hotel

Goal of the meeting

Review of the current results and preparation for the final conference of the Nexus project.

Objectives

1. Presentation of the expert works' results:
 - Report on the WEF Nexus case studies applicable to the Central Asian region;
 - Institutional gap analysis;
 - Capacity needs assessment;
 - Policy briefs and training modules.
2. Exchange of knowledge on practical application of the WEF Nexus approach:
 - Results of the study tour to the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and the International Sava River Basin Commission;
 - Progress report on the implementation of pilot projects in Central Asia.
3. Discussion of the regional WEF Nexus-based investment projects ideas developed for Nexus Phase II with the members of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and representatives of International Financial Institutions;
4. Discussion of the draft Agenda of the Final Conference and other matters.

Meeting Agenda

Day 1: 18 June 2019	
09:00-09:30	Registration of participants Coffee - tea
Opening of the meeting <i>Moderator: Mr Vaysidin Saidov, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Coordinator, Director of CAREC office in Tajikistan, CAREC</i>	
09:30-09:50	Welcome and Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr Shaimzoda Djamshed, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan ● Mr Emil Dankov, Project Manager, EU Delegation to Tajikistan ● Mr Serdar Eyeberenov, EC IFAS ● Mr Vaysidin Saidov, Director of CAREC office in Tajikistan, CAREC
09:50-10:00	Approval of the meeting agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC
10:00-10:20	Introduction of the participants (tour de table)
10:20-11:00	Coffee-Break and group photo
Session 1. Results of EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project – Part I <i>Moderator: Ms Snejana Popova, Project Officer, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i>	
11:00-11:30	GENERAL OVERVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC Discussion
11:30-12:30	EXPERT WORKS Main findings and recommendations by IUCN based on the results of their expert works: 1) Report on the WEF Nexus case studies; 2) Institutional gap analysis; 3) Capacity needs assessment for decision makers in Central Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms Kristin Meyer, Nexus Central Asia Coordinator, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, IUCN Discussion
12:30-13:00	EXPERT WORKS Materials to support developers of investment projects (policy briefs, training modules, selection methodology, indicators) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr Rustam Issakhoyev, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Specialist, CAREC Discussion
13:00-14:00	Lunch
Session 2. Results of EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project – Part II <i>Moderator: Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC</i>	
14:00-15:00	NEXUS PILOT PROJECTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Outcomes of the informal technical consultations on the Water and Energy Consortium in Central Asia” by Ms Aksulu Kushanova, Project Specialist, CAREC; ● Tajikistan – Mr Rustam Abdullaev, Chief Specialist, Department of Water and Energy Policy, Development of Science and Technologies, Ministry of Energy and

	<p>Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan (15 min);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turkmenistan – Mr Batyr Kurbanov, Member of the Regional Expert Group, The Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (15 min); • Uzbekistan – Mr Vokidzhon Akhmadzhonov, Information and Analytical Resources Centre under the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan (15 min); <p>Discussion</p>
15:00-15:30	Coffee-Break
15:30-16:30	<p>STUDY TOUR</p> <p>Overview of the transboundary river management in the Danube and Sava River Basins (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aksulu Kushanova, Project Specialist, CAREC</i> <p>Brief feedback, lessons learned and recommendations in regards to the Central Asia by the participants (10 min each participants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazakhstan - Daniyar Sharip, Chief Expert, Department of the Transboundary Rivers, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan • Tajikistan - Mr Maruf Mulloev, Chief Specialist, Division of Water Resources, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan • Regional organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr Marimbay Saparbayev, Deputy Head, Water Basin Organization “Amydarya” ○ Mr Ilchom Zhurayev, Plenipotentiary Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea ○ Mr Bolat Bekniyaz, Director, Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan <p>Discussion</p> <p>Video Presentation about Study-Tour (5 minutes)</p>
16:30-17:00	<p>Summary of the day and closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Snejana Popova, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan, Cooperation Section, Project Officer • Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC • Mr Vaysidin Saidov, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Coordinator, Director of CAREC office in Tajikistan

Day 2: 19 June 2019	
09:00-09:30	Coffee - tea
09:30-09:40	<p>Introduction of the Day 2 agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC •
<p>Session 3. Results of EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project – Part III <i>Moderator: Saghit Ibatulin, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Regional Expert, former Chairman of EC IFAS (2008-2013)</i></p>	
09:40-11:20	<p>Projects presented by initiators:</p> <p>INVESTMENT PROJECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 1.1 “Modernization and introduction of SCADA in the Syrdarya Basin” - Mr Shukrat Talipov, National Expert (15 minutes);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project 1.4 “Improvement of the water resources in the Amydarya River Basin through the rehabilitation and modernization of the water facilities and interstate legislative framework” - Mr Marimbay Saparbayev, Deputy Head, Water Basin Organization “Amydarya” (15 minutes); ● Project 1.3 “Dam Safety and other Hydrotechnical Facilities (HTFs) in Central Asia: Development of the Potential and the Regional Cooperation”- Mr Shukrat Talipov, National Expert (15 minutes) ● Project 3.1 “Sustainable water and energy supply in rural areas of Central Asia”, Mr Murod Nepesov, Secretariat of Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, Turkmenistan, Member of Regional Expert Group (15 minutes) <p>Comments and recommendations of the Regional Steering Committee and International Financing Institutions and Organizations</p>
11:20-12:00	Coffee-Break
12:00-13:20	<p>INVESTMENT PROJECTS</p> <p>Projects presented by initiators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project 2.1 “Rehabilitation of the Aral Sea ecosystem to combat desertification and land degradation” - Mr Bolat Bekniyaz, Director, Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (20 minutes); ● Project 3.2 “Integrated development of eco-and agro-tourism with elements of ethno-tourism in protected natural areas in the Aral Sea Basin” - Mr Bolat Bekniyaz, Director, Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (20 minutes); ● Small hydro powers - Mr Bolat Bekniyaz, Director, Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (20 minutes). <p>Comments and recommendations of the Regional Steering Committee and International Financing Institutions</p>
13:20-14:30	Lunch
<p>Session 4. Preparation to the Final Conference <i>Moderator: Ms Snejana Popova, Project Officer, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i></p>	
14:30-15:30	<p>Presentation of the draft Agenda of the Final Conference and other matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms Ludmilla Kiktenko, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Manager, CAREC <p>Discussion</p>
15:30-16:00	Coffee-Break
16:00-16:30	<p>Summary of the meeting and closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to the Republic of Kazakhstan ● Mr Saghit Ibatulin, EU Nexus CA Dialogue Project Regional Expert, former Chairman of EC IFAS (2008-2013) ● Mr Zafar Makhmudov, Executive Director, CAREC

Attachment 2: List of participants



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The Fourth Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee 18-19 June 2019, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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17.	Shuhrat Talipov	Nexus project expert, previously served as Deputy Chief of the Basin water association “Syrdarya” in the department of interstate water sharing	sh.g.talipov@gmail.com
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