

WATER INITIATIVES SUPPORT (WIS)

BACKGROUND

Currently, the Central Asian countries are facing challenges in both water governance and water management systems. These are characterized by inefficient irrigation and drainage network, outdated legislative and normative documents and agreements at all levels, lack of awareness on the most pressing issues in water management and their solutions, insufficient involvement and participation of local communities in water management, and lack of incentive-based economic tools to support basin ecosystems.

In Central Asia, there are hundreds of small transboundary river basins (STR), which accommodate about 1/7 of total population and provide 30-35% of water for irrigation. However, issues of STRs are not considered in the existing system of joint transboundary water management. Agreements on water allocation or water sharing of the Soviet period are in force; however, in most cases, these agreements are violated by parties. Almost all the small rivers have worn out hydrological posts or they are missing; there are no automatic and water metering equipments; maps of the current state of irrigated areas, pastures, degraded land, etc. are out of date. As a result of neglected STRs, there is much deterioration in the river basins, which has a huge impact on local communities.



APPROACH

- Think globally – act locally: Introduction of integrated water resources management (IWRM) principles and practices on small transboundary watersheds in Central Asia
- Multi-stakeholder participation: Strengthening involvement of regional, national, and local stakeholders in development and management of transboundary watersheds through establishment of regional and national working groups, as well as, small basin councils in which local communities are involved.
- Training and capacity building in water sector: Analyzing capacity needs; development of training materials, and conducting seminars and trainings on IWRM principles, basin planning, water efficiency and productivity, payments for ecosystem services, economic and financial tools, adaptation to climate change in water sector, and other best practices. In addition, WIS develops publications, handbooks on basin planning for all the Central Asian countries.
- Continuous public awareness raising: Awareness raising on the most pressing water issues and their solutions, through development and dissemination of informational materials (posters, video and photo materials), awareness raising campaigns, organization of demonstration and study tours to project sites.
- Innovative solutions: Testing effectiveness of innovative incentive-based economic and financial tools into environmental governance through application of Payment for Ecosystem Services, and other best practices.

OUR PARTNERS

Within Central Asia, CAREC's Water initiative support program cooperates with the ministries of water, agriculture, environmental protection, emergency situations, hydrometeorological agencies, as well as, with local authorities, basin councils, NGOs, farmers, water users, local communities.

The main donors of the program projects are UNECE, USAID, GIZ, Ministry of Climate and Environment of Norway, UNDP, European Commission, World Bank and World Bank institute, FAO, Government of Finland, and IWMI.

KEY RESULTS

1) Water quality and environmental aspects:

o From 2003 to 2010, WIS implemented a project on clean drinking water supply in small villages in Almaty Oblast, Kazakhstan. As a result, the water supply systems of 10 villages were reconstructed, 10 water users' cooperatives were organised and more than 11,000 people gained access to potable water;

o In the frame of "Water quality in Central Asia" project (2009-2012), basic water quality monitoring model including five parameters was developed and is a tangible step towards harmonization of water quality monitoring and information exchange in practical terms;

o Diagnostic report and a plan of development cooperation «Development of regional cooperation ensuring water quality in Central Asia» was developed. The plan includes a step-by-step plan on development of effective and coordinated national policy based on aspects of water quality in accordance with integrated management of water resources in Central Asia. The plan is confirmed by Central Asian countries;

- o Coordination of joint assessments, monitoring and information exchange on water quality was improved in two transboundary rivers – Talas (shared between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) and Vakhsh (Tajikistan);

2) Transboundary cooperation:

- o Ili-Balkhash Basin Integrated Management Plan was developed and accepted by the Government of Kazakhstan; in addition, trilateral international agreement on Ili-Balkhash Basin between Kazakhstan, China and Kyrgyzstan was drafted and accepted by the Government of Kazakhstan as a legal basis for transboundary integrated management of Ili-Balkhash Basin;
- o IWRM Plan for Aral-Syrdarya Basin was developed and approved by the Aral-Syrdarya Basin council. The plan serves as a basis for development of Aral-Syrdarya basin and ecosystems;
- o Local stakeholders' committees/small basin councils established in three small watersheds (2 transboundary: Isfara and Aspara river basins, 3 national: Ugam (KZ) and 2 irrigation zones in Kazakh part of Aral-Syrdarya Basin) for promotion and development of joint transboundary action plans for sustainable development of watersheds. Stakeholders include: national and local authorities, local communities, water users, farmers, NGOs, local business, and other interest groups;
- o IWRM Plans for Isfara (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), Aspara (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) and Ugam (Kazakhstani part) was developed and approved by local communities, local authorities and on national level.

3) Training and capacity building for water sector

- o Development of a training module on water quality in Central Asia and its approbation on university students in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, April-May 2012;
- o “Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development” (CALPESD) was initiated by UNEP and CAREC successfully conducted in 2010-2014 and planned for 2015-2017. The program included subjects on IWRM, basin planning, drinking water, water quality. Participants of the CALPESD are emerging leaders and professionals from government, private sector and civil society across Central Asian countries and Afghanistan;
- o Development of a handbook on basin planning for water practitioners and water users all the Central Asian countries.

4) Knowledge hub and cooperation platform

- o Networking with educational institutions in Central Asia and abroad in order to establish a regional knowledge platform “center of excellence” in Central Asia on land and water resources management for climate-smart agriculture to provide sustainable transfer of knowledge and skills through an increased institutional capacity and improved quality of educational programmes and knowledge-sharing skills;
- o Development of a knowledge portal on basin planning and support experience exchange among water management practitioners: www.riverbp.net;

- o Integrating efforts of various stakeholders for dissemination of best practices and knowledge;
- o Established & supported by CAREC, and functioning since 2010 the joint national and regional working groups on water quality and IWRM, which include representatives of ministries of water management, environmental protection, health care, emergency situations, and hydrometeorological services of all Central Asian countries, as well as, independent experts.

5) Analytical works

- o Analytical report on baseline key features and characteristics of Ile-Balkhash river basin, developed within the project of EU “Development of integrated management plan for Ile-Balkhash basin, Kazakhstan”, 2007

Regional report on water quality in Central Asia:

- o Diagnostic report and cooperation development plan “Development of regional cooperation to ensure water quality in Central Asia”, developed within the project of UNECE “Water quality in Central Asia”, 2012

National reports on assessment of legal and institutional frameworks for integrated water resources management and river basin planning

- o National report on assessment of legal and institutional frameworks for integrated water resources management and river basin planning in the Republic of Kazakhstan, developed within the project of USAID “Stakeholders’ partnerships in collaborative policymaking: Fostering transboundary cooperation on small watersheds in Central Asia”, 2013
- o National report on assessment of legal and institutional frameworks for integrated water resources management and river basin planning in Kyrgyz Republic, developed within the project of USAID “Stakeholders’ partnerships in collaborative policymaking: Fostering transboundary cooperation on small watersheds in Central Asia”, 2013
- o National report on assessment of legal and institutional frameworks for integrated water resources management and river basin planning in Tajikistan, developed within the project of USAID “Stakeholders’ partnerships in collaborative policymaking: Fostering transboundary cooperation on small watersheds in Central Asia”, 2013

Publications: <https://www.riverbp.net/eng/library/publications/>

For more information please contact:

Tais Reznikova, Acting Program Manager, Water Initiatives Support (WIS) Program, The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia

40, Orbita-1, 050043, Almaty Republic of Kazakhstan

Tel: **+7727 265 4333**; 265 4334 (ext.192)

Mob: **+7778 900 2814** (mob)

Email: treznikova@carececo.org

Websites: www.carececo.org

www.riverbp.net