

## Experience the Nexus approach through a simulation game!

Developed in the frame of the EU funded project “[Nexus Dialogue in Central Asia](#)”, the project team introduced and played the Nexus Game for the first time at the Central Asia Leadership Programme on September 18, 2019 in Almaty. The 30 participants came from all over Central Asia and Afghanistan, representing mainly sectoral ministries and academia (70% of the participants were women). Playing the game allowed to introduce the concept of the Water, Energy and Food Nexus approach. Indeed, the evaluation of the event showed that around 60% of the participants were not familiar with this approach before.



The Nexus Game was played by three equally divided groups - two tables for Russian speaking and one table for English speaking participants. The full Nexus Game takes up to 3-4 hours with stimulation of five different scenarios. Due to time constraints, the project team adapted the game so that it would not take more than one hour by stimulating 2 scenarios only: rainy and dry situations followed by investment decisions made respectively by upstream and downstream countries.



In spite of the complexity of the game at the first glance, the participants quickly picked up the rules and were actively engaged in stimulating and heated discussion on how to allocated available resources.



The game illustrated well-known issues and conflicts between upstream and downstream countries, the downstream countries for example did not want to accept the pollution from the upstream countries. This resulted in tensions, even between the players during the simulation Game.



By taking the roles of the Minister of Agriculture, Energy and Water, the participants were faced with important decisions in the tradeoffs between the water, energy and food sectors. In most cases they fell into the common pattern of thinking only about one sector, but that is not how to win this game. This way the nexus approach had to be used to find multisectoral solutions.



All three groups actively negotiated, bartered and proposed joint construction and management solutions of transboundary water facilities and found ways to benefit from the comparative advantages of upstream and downstream countries. Overall, the participants experienced in reality the interdependence between the sectors and trade-offs and synergies between competing uses of water, land and energy-related resources.



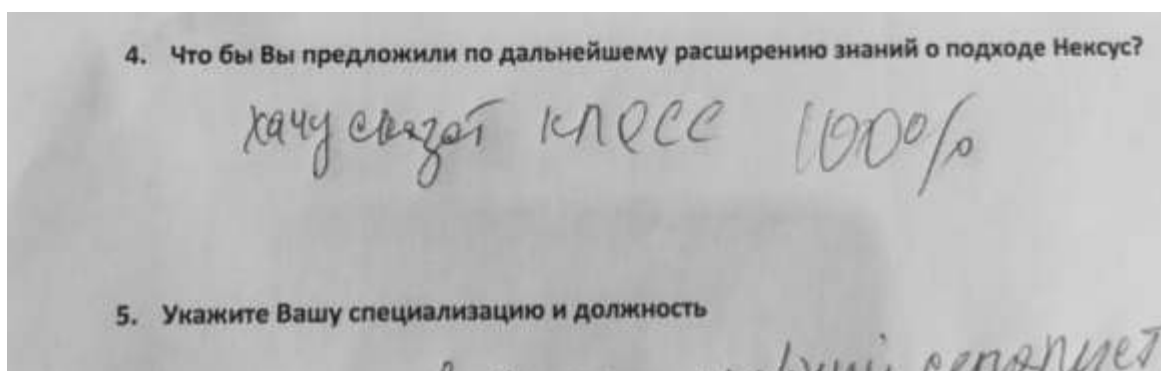
The Nexus Game achieved what it is designed to do. Moreover, the participants really enjoyed the stimulation game, did not want to stop playing, and expressed their interest to play all scenarios of the Nexus Game. Some of the participants even enquired where it can be bought, so contact details of the respective vendors were shared.



Our post-game evaluation showed that the game increased the knowledge about Nexus of 99% of the participants and 100% concluded that the Nexus approach should be considered also in real life. To enhance the knowledge about Nexus, the participants proposed to use more stimulation games, social networks, nexus case studies and practical examples, capacity building and introduce it at the academic level.

#### Extracts from the evaluation related to Nexus Game

*"It was super 100%"*



*"More of this kind of games, please!"*

3. Вы поддерживаете подход Нексус?

- ✓ Да
- Нет
- Затрудняюсь ответить

4. Что бы Вы предложили по дальнейшему расширению знаний о подходе Нексус?

Больше игр и т.п.

Подходе Нексус расширились после сессии?

We SHOULD PLAY THE FULL, 5-HOUR GAME!

Нексус?

*"Conduct this Nexus Game more often. It has more impact!"*

- Затрудняюсь ответить

4. Что бы Вы предложили по дальнейшему расширению знаний о подходе Нексус?

проводить игры связанные с Нексусом,  
это оказывает больше влияние.