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Central Asia Nexus Dialogue Project: Fostering Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus and Multi-Sector Investment (Phase II)

The Fifth Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee

December 5, 2022 | Royal Tulip Hotel, 401 Ospanov St., Almaty, Kazakhstan

MINUTES

The fifth meeting of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the European Union-funded Central Asia Nexus Dialogue Project: Fostering Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus and Multi-Sector Investment (Phase II) (Project) was dedicated to review of the progress in institutionalization of Water, Energy and Food (WEF) Nexus approach in Central Asia (CA) and discussion of analytical reports of international consultants, gaps in project implementation, and strategic focus of potential next phase. The meeting was attended by 41 persons, including RSC members nominated from the five beneficiary countries, officers of regional European Union (EU) delegations, and international and regional partners in Central Asia (*see the concept, agenda and list of participants in the Annex*).



Image 1: Members and participants of off-line RSC meeting.

The meeting was opened by **Tatiana Siegel-Rivera** (Deputy Head of Finance and Contracts Division of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan) with a welcome address on behalf of **Johannes Baur** (Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan). The address mentioned the challenging situation in the world and the importance of transition to the green economy to contain global warming within 1.5 °C as per the Paris Agreement goals. Sustainable use of water and energy is a key priority for the EU in CA. The Nexus approach helps find optimal solutions, whereby actions in one sector have positive impact on other sectors. The EU is ready to support the region's transition to the green economy through viable investment projects and thus contribute to long-term peace and prosperity in CA. The address also mentioned the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference: Global Gateway for Sustainable Development that took place on November 18, 2022 in Samarkand. The EU presented two initiatives in this conference, one on water, energy and climate change, and another one on digital connectivity. It was announced that these initiatives would lay the basis for future cooperation with CA in achievement of the following goals, among others: finding balance between various competing needs in water through strengthening of transboundary and regional management of water resources, and enhancement of legal and institutional frameworks for adaptation to climate change. The address expressed satisfaction with the Nexus project progress and hopes that project outputs will help the beneficiary countries prepare investment proposals for modernization of the water and energy sector infrastructure.

This was followed by a welcome address of **Zafar Makhmudov** (Executive Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)). Mr. Makhmudov mentioned that this event would be an anniversary 10th meeting, if the project implementation period covered both Phase I and Phase II. The Nexus notion came a long way during this time in CA countries, starting from reluctance to believe in this approach to what we have now, when virtually at all levels people speak about the need in links between sectors and almost each development program and strategy calls for implementation of the Nexus approach. Mr. Makhmudov noted that CA region undergoes transition from the sector-based approach to a cross-sector approach, aligned and integrated pathway of social and economic development without damage to the environment. On behalf of CAREC, he thanked the EU for the opportunity to learn, adapt and implement the Nexus approach in the region. He expressed gratitude to regional and national partners for selection and effective implementation of national and regional Nexus demo projects. He also extended appreciation to international partners who enabled fulfillment of project co-financing commitments by engaging international expertise for analytical and technical works.

The first session was dedicated to overview of project progress and results. **Ludmila Kiktenko** (Program Manager, CAREC) opened the session. Mrs. Kiktenko started her presentation with alignment and approval of the fourth meeting minutes. Key items of the minutes and action plan approved during the previous meeting were articulated. Further, Mrs. Kiktenko demonstrated the overall logical matrix of the project, project progress and results as of December 1, 2022. She also presented statistical analytics for June 2020 through November 2022. Gender breakdown of project participants was presented: 41% women and 59% men. However, it was noted that while men prevail in expert work, women make a majority in the education sector. After that, the action plan for the remaining period, through May 2023, was presented. The plan includes such actions as:

1. Completion of the demo project at Tuyamuyun Hydroelectric Complex (THC) and pumping stations in the Republic of Tajikistan: engagement of international financial institutions (IFIs) in continuation of the project, development and submission of investment proposals to donors and investors.
2. Completion of the demo project in Kazakhstan: collection and analysis of saxaul survival rates on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea, calculation of resources consumed for growing of saxaul seedlings.
3. Analysis of findings of the Nexus approach implementation and recommendations for further implementation (the Global Nexus Secretariat).
4. Development of communities of practice in CA in partnership with USAID/WAVE.
5. Holding of a final conference in May 2023, reporting and preparation of proposals for potential Phase III.

Snejana Popova (Project Officer, Cooperation Unit, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan) made the next presentation on Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) evaluation. Mrs. Popova started the presentation with an overview of the external monitoring system concept, emphasizing that this system serves to strengthen the operational management and ensure effective support and accountability for achievement of specific results in external actions of the EU. Expert, Janet Bedasse, conducted monitoring of the Nexus project for seven key criteria during October 3-14, 2022. *Relevance* of the project was rated as high, as the project supports implementation of sustainable development goals (SDG) – 2, 6 and 7; focuses on training and institutionalization of WEF nexus in CA, and helps address drinking water supply, energy efficiency and irrigation issues. For the next assessment criterion – *coordination, complementarity and value added for EU* – the project was also rated high. Mrs. Popova highlighted the role of the implementing agency (CAREC), which was able to create a circle of support through search of synergies and partnership with multiple stakeholders thereby expanding the project scope. For the third criterion – *project logic, monitoring and lessons learnt* – all levels of logical framework and vertical logic in the results chain were set adequately, and the available monitoring system is sufficient. However, there was a recommendation to improve the monitoring system for training performance, risk assessment and preventive actions. It was also recommended to implement a monitoring system inside the organization (CAREC). For the fourth criterion – *efficiency* – no critical comments were made; appropriateness and sufficiency of human resources of project implementation arrangements was noted. *Effectiveness* – according to the monitoring, results that the project team is accountable for were achieved with the expected quality. Most objectives were completed by the end of Year 2; also, demand for and positive feedback about the Nexus interactive game was noted. However, it was highlighted that it is not clear whether the countries are ready to continue working independently on the WEF Nexus demo projects to bring them to the level of bank financing. *Sustainability* – this criterion was considered from two perspectives, sustained interest of stakeholders and financial viability. While the first criterion was rated high, the financial aspect remains uncertain, because in case of projects focused on water availability and access, water tariffs in CA are either not available or are very low. With respect to the last criterion – *interdisciplinary matters* – the expert provided recommendations regarding gender analysis for gender-based needs assessment. In this regard, it was noted that the project does not have an understanding of specific needs of various groups of society. Nonetheless, inclusivity, human right for water, environmental and climate change issues were integrated in the project concept, capacity building activities and demo projects.

Zamira Zholdaskyzy (Coordinator for development of Community of Practice and Network of Academia Society, CAREC) covered institutionalization of the Nexus interactive approach in universities. The Nexus interactive game was played in four CA countries, with engagement of over 300 professors, Master's and PhD students. In addition, 17 game kits were given to the Public Administration Academy and national universities. The universities show initiative and independently hold the game within their courses and modules, such as water diplomacy, green economy, water resources management, geocology, and methods of international conflicts resolution, where over 100 students participated in the game. At the end of her presentation, Mrs. Zholdaskyzy presented further project goals and outlook, such as integration of the Nexus approach in the curricula; dissemination of the game in government agencies (line ministries); translation to national languages of CA countries; and holding of interregional game among students.

Further, **Aksulu Kushanova** (Energy Investments Specialist, CAREC), presented an overview of results of all demo projects. Mrs. Kushanova reported that all analytical works under demo projects were completed as per Terms of Reference; concept of reforestation of the dry Aral Sea bed was developed and transferred to FAO for further elaboration and submission to the Green Climate Fund for the equivalent of USD 10 million; the Eurasian Stabilization Fund expressed interest in investment proposal on the demo project in Tajikistan and started developing feasibility study for modernization of Golodnostepskaya Pumping Station - 1 (GPS-1); investment proposals on sediment dredging and processing from the Ruslovoe reservoir were under development; proposals on investment opportunities of demo projects are publicized among government agencies, financial development institutions and private sector.

The second session was dedicated to lessons learnt and next steps in institutionalization of the Nexus approach in CA. Representatives of all five countries participated in the discussion that was built around the following questions:

1. What were successes and gaps in the project implementation?
2. Do you think that the WEF Nexus can be implemented at the national level? If yes, how?
3. In your work, did you observe any interest from international financial institutions in financing of Nexus investment projects? If yes, what were the main barriers to attraction of investors in the projects?
4. What are your recommendations on scope / area of the potential next phase, including the innovative approach?

Kazakhstan:

Bolat Bekniyaz (Director of the Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (IFAS)) presented a new project idea for the Aral region, which was developed as part of the Convention to Combat Desertification but did not find support at that time. Mr. Bekniyaz narrated about the Kyzylkum Desert in the eastern part of the Aral Sea, with over 300 hydrological flowing wells. Mr. Bekniyaz proposes organizing an oasis irrigation system and free-range animal husbandry on the basis of these flowing wells. He added that mobile solar panels and wind turbines would be required to supply power to this system. According to Mr. Bekniyaz, barchan depressions have fertile soil, which, with right management, can become a place for cattle grazing, as well as a source for conservation of reserve and winter forage.

Serik Bekmaganbetov (Authorized Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFSA)) expressed his appreciation to the organizers, participants and donors for the opportunity to participate in both phases of the Nexus project, because its activities are interesting, timely, diverse, and important, as they address relevant challenges of CA countries. He proposed considering the idea of a demo project in Kyrgyzstan to address the hazardous tailing dumps located in transboundary river basins. Mr. Bekmaganbetov reported that hazardous wastes gradually enter the Syrdarya River basin through the soil, and thus directly affect Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. Mr. Bekmaganbetov emphasized the links between the ecosystems, believing that addressing the problem in Kyrgyzstan would help addressing it in the downstream countries. In addition, he proposed a project on innovative methods of horticulture in Kyzylorda Region, which apply new technology, water and energy saving, i.e. the Nexus approach. According to Mr. Bekmaganbetov, a pilot in one farm / enterprise would demonstrate effectiveness and profitability of greenhouse business (new generation greenhouse) in the Aral Sea region.

Kyrgyzstan:

Daniyar Zhanuzakov (Head of Food Security Department, Ministry of Agriculture of Kyrgyz Republic) reported that one of priority areas in Kyrgyzstan was food security and preservation of glaciers. According to Mr. Zhanuzakov, another area that draws attention in the country is improvement of the irrigation system, and the project supports such activities as well drilling and land remediation. There is also a project on efficient use of water resources, which promotes drip and sprinkler irrigation. As part of the potential next phase, he proposed focusing on remediation of marginal lands and on energy efficient irrigation systems.

Tajikistan:

Bakhrom Gaforzoda (Secretary of the National Commission on Irrigation and Drainage of the Republic of Tajikistan (NCID), Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation under the Government of the Republic

of Tajikistan (ARI) thanked the EU Delegations in CA, regional partners, CAREC team, and RSC members. Mr. Gaforzoda reported that the project in Tajikistan had been implemented on time and in accordance with the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The project supported a demonstration project on modernization of pumping stations in Zafarabad district of Sughd Region using energy efficient technology and automation of power consumption metering at pumping stations in this region as a whole, thereby contributing to achievement of water and land productivity. Results of this work laid the basis for further efforts on attraction of investments for implementation of this demonstration project. Thanks to active efforts of the project team, the project engaged international expertise, Danish company Grundfos, as well as co-financing of the CAWEP trust fund (Central Asia Water and Energy Program) and accompanying technical expertise of European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP) and the World Bank project.

In addition, Mr. Gaforzoda reported that donors and the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) private sector expressed interest in this project, where the analytical documents illustrated the opportunities for investors / donors. At present, according to Mr. Gaforzoda, preparation of an investment application is under way, with a political decision to be made regarding the attraction of a loan of Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD) for modernization of pumping stations. The World Bank (WB) also expresses interest in implementation of automated power metering systems at pumping stations in the Sughd Region.

Further, Mr. Gaforzoda articulated several proposals on demo projects in the Republic of Tajikistan as part of the potential next phase, such as: assessment of sedimentation in ARI reservoirs in the Republic of Tajikistan; continuation of automation works for monitoring of power consumption at pumping stations; modernization and implementation of SCADA system at pumping stations in other regions of the Republic of Tajikistan; research to attract PPP in intra-farm reclamation and irrigation systems; research to introduce the experience of Australian company RUBICON for implementation of advanced approach to solar panel-based canal structure management; strengthening of Nexus approach discussions at cross-sectoral platform of NCID RT to introduce the Nexus approach in various state programs.

Turkmenistan:

Merdan Nazarov (Head of Digital Technology Department, State Committee for Water Resources of Turkmenistan) noted that based on the results of the Nexus project activities, a cross-sectoral approach is relevant for Turkmenistan. He also noted that this approach was recommended by the President of Turkmenistan, is actively promoted at state level, and is part of the social and economic development strategy of the country for 2019-2025.

Georgi Kurtovezov (National Expert in Turkmenistan) noted that a lot of work was done to assess the condition of THC and reported on results of Nexus project research, which found that useful storage of the Ruslovoe reservoir reduced from design value of 2,340 billion m³ to 863 million m³, and reservoir sedimentation parameters changed accordingly. Assessment was carried out to understand the options for rehabilitation of THC and beneficial use of sediments and attract interested parties; approaches were identified to use the water resources efficiently, reduce nonproductive water losses and apply water saving irrigation technology. Mr. Kurtovezov emphasized the large potential of the Nexus approach for discovery of new ways of investment attraction to ensure WEF security in the region.

Uzbekistan:

Ilkhom Zhurayev (Authorized Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea) reported that during the field meetings in May this year it was observed that reservoir sediment was used as fertilizer on the farm fields in Khorezm Region of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which demonstrated again the various opportunities of sediment application. Uzbekistan initiated adoption of the Green Agenda for Central Asia regional program aimed at adaptation of countries to climate change and broader application of resource saving technology. In addition, Mr.

Zhurayev highlighted the negative impact of climate change trends on the Ruslovoe reservoir of THC and importance and urgency of the required actions.

In this context, a number of actions was proposed to preserve the Ruslovoe reservoir and to extend its operational life: (1) consider including and continuing the demonstration project in the following phases of Nexus project implementation; (2) for purpose of removing the accumulated sediment in the reservoir, consider developing an investment package and search for optimal solutions, for instance, launching production of construction materials, attraction of additional funds from the countries, private sector and international financial institutions; (3) support and facilitation of water saving technology development on irrigated lands of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and improvement of irrigation systems efficiency to decrease water shortage in the lower reaches of Amudarya; (4) consider opportunity of mechanical clean-up of the Ruslovoe reservoir of THC by purchasing dredging equipment; (5) along with dredging at the site, take other water management measures to reduce water stress downstream Amudarya and introduce water saving technology.

Mr. Zhurayev highlighted the need to introduce the Nexus approach in public policy by integrating these methods in the education system at the level of universities and professional development system. He also noted the interest in investment projects, in particular at THC, and emphasized the status of THC as a strategic asset, as well as importance of project implementation with participation of and supervision by authorized bodies. Mr. Zhurayev acknowledged the relevance of Nexus approach in the region and called for cooperation and sharing of knowledge and experience and emphasized the importance of concentration of joint efforts. He expressed appreciation to the organizers, participants and donors.

The third session started with a presentation by **Dr. Sanjay Giri** (Hydraulic Engineer, consulting firm “Deltrares”). Dr. Giri briefly described the problem of sedimentation at THC, which had been occurring for 40 years. THC is a transboundary multiple-purpose hydro complex, which is important for livelihoods of over 5 million people in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Dr. Giri has categorized the issues induced by sedimentation in the Ruslovoe reservoir based on related risks and implications, as well as efforts and resources required to address them. The first-category issues, which require urgent actions but at the same time do not need large technical and financial resources, are related to sedimentation near headworks that affects functionality, safety and flood discharge at the facility. The second-category issues, which require thorough feasibility and risk assessment and need large technical and financial resources, are related to storage loss at the Ruslovoe reservoir (almost 1.5 billion m³) due to significant sedimentation, which affects agriculture, water supply and flood management. Dr. Giri presented a series of tentative proposals on comprehensive measures to address THC challenges.

For the first-category issues, a concept consisting of several components was proposed, namely: (1) sediment dredging in the Ruslovoe reservoir and canals (main operational and maintenance measures) in combination with reservoir sluicing and flushing (supplementary measures); (2) optimization of reservoir operation and reservoir sluicing and flushing; (3) pilot commercial campaign to identify potential options of beneficial use for technical and economic assessment of their application in real life; (4) creation of confined and open areas for disposal, processing and treatment, as well as creation and recovery of habitats and environmental areas.

A potential approach to the second-category issues described by Dr. Giri includes the following three options: (1) capital dredging in the Ruslovoe reservoir with beneficial reuse of sediment; (2) construction and/or extension of the existing off-channel reservoir; (3) renovation of structures (for example, heightening or replacement of the dam). Along with the main measures, supplementary, mitigation, adaptive and supporting measures were proposed, including but not limited to the following: (1) regular sluicing/flushing during floods, as well as controlled transport/movement of sediment to downstream reach; (2) improvement of agricultural practices and methods, introduction of technology to reduce water losses in reservoirs and canals; (3) creation of systems for monitoring, information, forecasting and early warning on water and sediment inflow and quality, as well as reservoir condition. To sum up, Dr. Giri presented a number of risks and limitations associated with the proposed measures.

In the next presentation, **Dr. Vanja Westerberg** (Economist, International Consultant for Cost benefit analysis, consulting firm "Altus Impact") presented key highlights of the economic case for reuse of sediment from THC. Dr. Westerberg started with a statement that a reservoir is a resource, it is economically viable when benefits exceed costs, and when a reservoir is filled with sediment, this resource ceases to exist. It was noted that the economic design life of most reservoirs is 50 years. However, sedimentation lifecycle differs from the economic life. In most cases, sediment management is a future problem, because operational analysis of reservoirs does not include sedimentation costs. Some experts believe that if sediment management costs were included from the very beginning, reservoirs could have indefinite life. According to Dr. Westerberg, sustainable sediment management is divided into three main categories (1) prevention of sediment flow to the reservoir – sediment capturing, afforestation, recovery of landscape; (2) diversion, bypass, ventilation, sluicing – managing the sediment so that it leaves the reservoir; (3) last, the most expensive option – dredging.

Further, Dr. Westerberg mentioned the ongoing sand demand and supply crisis. For instance, recent research forecasts ~300% growth of demand for sand in low and middle-income regions in 2020-2060. It was also noted that sand is extracted in environmentally vulnerable areas, where sand extraction may lead to erosion, salinization of aquifers, loss of protection from storm surges, and biodiversity impact.

Therefore, reuse and circular economy practices are now encouraged worldwide. THC project can be used to demonstrate the value of reservoirs as sources of sustainably supplied sand, while ensuring the food, water and energy security and promoting the circular economy in CA. Dr. Westerberg also briefly demonstrated the benefits of sediment reuse, such as extension of reservoir life and protection of equipment, enhancement of hydro power capacity, irrigation and municipal water supply, strengthening of flood protection, lowering of stress of sand extraction from active habitats, etc. It was noted that concrete is the main driver of demand for sand, 30% of concrete is made of sand. Minimum annual demand for sand in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is 20 million m³.

Dr. Westerberg noted that market value of sediment reuse could not be determined with high accuracy, because the 16 samples do not represent the complete picture of the entire reservoir. In her financial analysis, she assumed that at least 40% (20% sand and 20% clay sand) of sediment could be reused. Therefore, the estimated revenue can be in the range of USD 3.3 to 6.6 million a year. After deduction of disposal, processing and transportation costs, the estimated net profit is USD 62,000 – 276,000 a year.

In addition, Dr. Westerberg highlighted that Uzbekistan is the largest agricultural consumer in CA, gave an example of economic benefits of drip irrigation over traditional furrow irrigation, and emphasized the need in climate-smart agriculture practices to counter the future challenges.

Next to present was **Dr. Adylkhan Tovasarov** (General Director of Central Asian Institute for Environmental Research). Dr. Tovasarov thanked for this opportunity and noted that Central Asian Institute for Environmental Research is guided by SDGs, and the institute is pleased to work with a project that shares its values.

The institute received three types of sediment samples from THC. In the first place, the samples were tested for radiology. The tests showed that the samples are radiologically clean and safe. Further, they determined the full chemical composition and identified many useful chemical elements and traces of precious metals. He noted that the water, which is rich in chemical elements, benefits the yields at local farms.

Dr. Tovasarov reported that experimental production of construction materials continued over three months, with over 100 bricks with failed texture and properties. Dr. Tovasarov demonstrated a ready product, which they were able to make from the samples: soil block, sand block, burnt brick and lining material. He also mentioned that the samples were sent to the sanitary and epidemiological service to check the suitability of the product for construction. The sanitary and epidemiological service confirmed that the product conforms to Category 1 construction GOST and is suitable for residential construction.

Dr. Tovasarov informed that the laboratory has technology to extract precious metals, which can be used in further research.

Several recommendations on sediment use were offered: 1) production of construction materials, 2) application as supplement for dry construction materials, 3) as fertilizers. The next steps were described: (1) R&D, (2) field trials, (3) feasibility study development, (4) implementation. Dr. Tovasarov emphasized the importance of field trials on the territory of the hydrocomplex to test the chemical composition of sediment at various depths. In addition, he proposed conducting biodiversity research on adjacent territory to consider the longer-term implications of the project.

During the **fourth session**, the floor was given to current and potential partners of the Nexus project. **Tatyana Leonova** (Regional Development Advisor, World Bank) highlighted the social and human resources aspects of the project and shared that the Nexus approach unites countries, people as donors, experts and beyond, emphasizing that this approach had demonstrated how the resources could be pooled and work together.

Dmitry Petrin (Senior Operations Officer, World Bank in Central Asia) noted the practical solutions developed within the framework of the Nexus project, the existing phenomenal community of people and suggested reflecting upon maintaining the human capital framework. Mr. Petrin emphasized that WEF sector is big politics, which one should not be afraid of and, by joint efforts, move big issues from the traditional point. It was also noted that the joint work of international partners within the framework of the Nexus project, including the European Union, USAID and the World Bank, is an excellent example of effective cooperation leading to direct positive effects in the countries of the region. Mr. Petrin noted that the World Bank will provide all support to these efforts through the development of policy dialogue, financing of investment projects and analytical work, including the planned activities under the 4th phase of the CAWEP trust fund.

Ekaterina Strikeleva (Chief of Party, USAID Regional Water and Environment Activity) noted that the educational part of the Nexus project was not initially covered. However, as the USAID project has a large educational component, this game turned into synergy, point of cooperation and is now quickly spreading across the region. She also mentioned the lectures that were delivered in cooperation with the EU project on THC, Global Nexus Secretariat and the pilot in the Aral region. Mrs. Strikeleva informed about the launch of a community of practice at CAREC platform, where access to recordings of all lectures will be opened soon.

Mrs. Strikeleva reported that thanks to the THC case, they received requests from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to conduct similar assessments of sedimentation in Kasansai and Talimarjan reservoirs. Works at these sites are planned for 2023. It is also planned to develop an investment project for Talimarjan reservoir.

The session was closed by **Takayoshi Kato** (Environmental Economist, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) with a presentation on goals of IKI Nexus project in CA. Mr. Kato started the presentation acknowledging the importance of achievements of Nexus dialogue project in CA. He informed that OECD jointly with EBRD, SIC ICWC, UNECE and FAO plan to launch a new project in CA addressing the theme of energy, water and land use. Mr. Kato also noted that they had completed the project preparation stage. OECD benefited tremendously from results of Nexus dialogue project in CA, including the extensive analytical work, capacity building activities, and case studies, such as THC. According to Mr. Kato, increasingly more people speak about the Nexus approach in the region. Mr. Kato praised the work of CAREC peers and thanked them for cooperation. He also thanked the EU and CAREC representatives for their participation in IKI Nexus meetings, noting that OECD looks forward to cooperation with EU, CAREC and other partners in CA.

Snejana Popova (Project Officer, Cooperation Unit, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan) expressed her satisfaction with the project monitoring report findings, as well as confidence that the project solutions will be applied in the future, and thanked all participants for the interest and active participation in the meeting.

Tatiana Siegel-Rivera (Deputy Head of Finance and Contracts Division of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan) congratulated all RSC members and project participants with the successfully completed

activities and on behalf of the European Union Delegation expressed her satisfaction with the project progress.

Ludmila Kiktenko (Program Manager, CAREC) thanked the experts and project team for the work done and congratulated RSC members and participants with completion of the fifth RSC meeting.

Key results of the fifth RSC meeting:

- Discussed project progress and outputs;
- Held session between representatives of five CA countries regarding lessons learnt and further steps for the potential next phase;
- Listened to presentations of international and national experts;
- Held the session with partners to understand potential cooperation with the project.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Fifth RSC meeting – Concept and agenda;

Annex 2: Fifth RSC meeting – List of participants.



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Background

The project “Central Asia Nexus Dialogue Project: Fostering Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus and Multi-Sector Investment”¹ (the “Project”) in its Phase II (June 2020 – June 2023) aims to institutionalise the water, energy and food (WEF) Nexus approach in national and regional governance structures and in the process of making investment decisions to contribute to achieving WEF security in Central Asia.

The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) in partnership with government authorities from the water, energy and food sectors and interested development partners.

The Project has three main areas of activities:

- (i) Enhancing the WEF Nexus dialogue;
- (ii) Building capacity of the Project’s beneficiaries; and
- (iii) Implementing demonstration projects to showcase the multisectoral approach.

The [Nexus demonstration projects](#) are supported by two projects implemented by the World Bank experts: “Laboratory of Innovative Solutions for the Water Sector of Central Asia” under the Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP)", and "Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Program in the Aral Sea Basin" ([CAMP4ASB](#)). To ensure the synergy, the Project also cooperates with the USAID Regional Water and Vulnerable Environment Activity (WAVE) and the Swiss [Blue Peace Central Asia](#) Initiative.

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC), established under the Project, consists of 15 members nominated by the relevant agencies from the five Central Asian countries to ensure awareness of the Project’s activities, coordination with national priorities and smooth implementation in the beneficiary countries.

Goal of the meeting

The 5th RSC meeting aims to take stock of the progress of WEF Nexus approach institutionalization in Central Asia, discuss expert analytical deliverables of international consultants, identify gaps of the project implementation and brainstorm on strategic focus for the next potential Project’s phase.

Format

The meeting will have a consultation format through interactive discussions with participants. The first half of the day (sessions 1 and 2) is only for RSC members and project team to discuss project implementation issues. Sessions 3 and 4 are dedicated to identifying strategic partnerships and will be open to all partners and stakeholders.

The meeting will be carried out offline, with a zoom link for participants unable to travel to Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87488080002?pwd=eTdzMm02Y1hRbTYrNEFORFp0Skk3QT09>

Zoom Access Code: 874 8808 0002;

Meeting ID: 781093;

Meeting time and date: 5 December 2022 at 10:00 Almaty time.

¹ For more information about the Project, please, see [here](#)

Location	Local time
Almaty (Kazakhstan) Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)	10:00 – 17:00
Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) Dushanbe (Tajikistan) Tashkent (Uzbekistan)	09:00 – 16:00

To support networking, the Project will organize a joint lunch and dinner at the meeting venue on 5 December 2022.

Language of the meeting

Russian and English are the working languages of the meeting. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

Participants

- RSC members (nominated representatives of WEF related line ministries);
- EU Delegations to Central Asian countries;
- Global Nexus Secretariat representative;
- International partners and experts;
- CAREC.

Agenda

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TIME	DESCRIPTION
OPENING SESSION <i>Moderator: Ludmilla Kiktenko, Programme Manager, CAREC</i>	
10:00 - 10:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technical remarks on meeting rules ● Introduction of the participants (Tour-de-table) ● Approval of the minutes of the 4th RSC meeting² ● Approval of the agenda for the 5th RSC meeting
10:20 -10:30	Welcome Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Johannes Baur, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i> ● <i>Zafar Makhmudov, Executive Director, CAREC</i>
SESSION 1: PROGRESS AND RESULTS TO DATE <i>Moderator: Ludmilla Kiktenko, Programme Manager, CAREC</i>	
10:30-10:50	Taking Stock of the Project's progress

² For more information, please, see [here](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results achieved so far based on logframe • Work Plan for the next 5 months <p><i>Ludmilla Kiktenko, Programme Manager, CAREC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Results Oriented Monitoring mission <p><i>Snejana Popova, Project Officer, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i></p>
10:50-11:00	<p>Institutionalization of the Nexus approach with the help of the interactive NEXUS simulation in the universities</p> <p><i>Zamira Zholdaskyzy, Project Specialist, CAREC</i></p>
11:00-11:15	<p>Summary of the results under all demonstration projects</p> <p><i>Aksulu Kushanova, Energy Investment Specialist, CAREC</i></p>
11:15-11:45	<p>Coffee break - Group Photo</p>
<p>SESSION 2: LESSONS LEARNT AND NEXT STEPS TO INSTITUTIONALISE THE WEF NEXUS APPROACH IN CENTRAL ASIA</p> <p><i>Moderator: Snejana Popova, Project Officer, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i></p>	
11:45-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazakhstan: <i>Serik Bekmaganbetov</i>, Authorised Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Executive Committee of the IFAS and <i>Bolat Bekniyaz</i>, Director of IFAS Executive Board in Kazakhstan; • Kyrgyzstan: <i>Daniyar Zhanuzakov</i>, Head of Food Security Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic and <i>Emilbek Kydymkanov</i>, Head of Department of Agrarian Policy and Forecast of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration of Kyrgyz Republic; • Tajikistan: <i>Daler Abdurazokzoda</i>, Head of the Department of Water and Energy Policy, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan and <i>Bahrom Gafforzoda</i>, Secretary of the NCID of the Republic of Tajikistan, Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; • Turkmenistan: <i>Charyev Saparmurat</i>, Chief specialist of the International Water Cooperation Unit, Water Use Department, State Committee for Water Management of Turkmenistan and <i>Georgiy Kurtovozov</i>, National Expert in Turkmenistan; • Uzbekistan: <i>Ilkhom Zhuraev</i>, Authorised Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and <i>Kurbanbai Babazhanov</i>, Head of the Nexus TWG from Uzbekistan, Head of the Division of Operation of Tuyamuyun hydroelectric complex <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were the successes and gaps in the implementation of the Project so far? 2. Do you believe that the WEF Nexus approach may be introduced at national level? If yes, how? 3. Have you observed any interest from International Financial Institutions in financing NEXUS investment projects in the course of your work? If yes, what were the main obstacles to attract investors into the projects? 4. What would you recommend for the scope/direction of the next possible Phase?

SESSION 3: INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE ON SEDIMENTS CLEANING	
<i>Moderator: Aksulu Kushanova, Energy Investment Specialist, CAREC</i>	
12:30-13:00	<p>Transboundary demo project on Tuyamuyun Hydro Complex (UZ-TKM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recommended approach to the treatment and recycling of silt in the Ruslovoe reservoir (15 min) <i>Dr. Sanjay Giri, Hydraulic engineer, consulting company “Deltrares”</i> ● Profit and loss of the treatment and recycling of silt in the Ruslovoe reservoir (15 min) <i>Dr. Vanja Westerberg, Economist, consulting company “Altus Impact”</i> ● Update on the progress of the laboratory experiments on producing the burnt bricks out of the silt of Ruslovoe reservoir (10 min) <i>Dr. Adylkhan Tovasarov, General Director of "Central Asian Institute for Environmental Research"</i>
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
SESSION 4: COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DONORS TO IMPLEMENT NEXUS APPROACH	
<i>Moderator: Ludmilla Kiktenko, Programme Manager, CAREC</i>	
14:30 - 15:30	<p>World Bank CAWEP <i>Tatyana Leonova, Regional Development Advisor, World Bank</i></p> <p>Global Nexus Secretariat (GNS) <i>Irene Sander, Coordinator of the Global Nexus Secretariat, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)</i></p> <p>USAID Regional Water and Environment Activity <i>Ekaterina Strikeleva, Chief of Party, USAID Regional Water and Environment Activity</i></p> <p>Energy, Water and Land-use Nexus in Central Asia (supported by Germany’s IKI programme) <i>Takayoshi Kato, Environmental Economist, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)</i></p>
15:30-15:45	Coffee break
CLOSING	
16:30-17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Johannes Baur, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i> ● <i>Snejana Popova, Project Officer, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan</i> ● <i>Ludmila Kiktenko, Programme Manager, CAREC</i>
18:00-19:00	Dinner



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**Central Asia Nexus Dialogue Project: Fostering Water, Energy and Food
Security Nexus and Multi-Sector Investment (Phase II)**
5th meeting of the Regional Steering Committee
5 December, 2022 (hybrid format) | Hotel Royal Tulip | Almaty, Kazakhstan

List of Participants

#	Name	Position	Contacts
NEXUS PROJECT REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE			
1	Bolat Bekniyaz	Director of the Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (IFAS)	bbolat@mail.ru
2	Serik Bekmaganbetov	Authorised Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)	serik.ifas@gmail.com
3	Daniyar Sagadiev	Head of the Transboundary Rivers Department, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan.	da.sagadiev@ecogeo.gov.kz
Kyrgyz Republic			
4	Daniyar Januzakov	Head of Food Security Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic	d.januzakov@mail.ru
5	Mirbek Esengulov	Chief Specialist of the Energy Department, State Committee for Industry, Energy and Subsoil Use of the Kyrgyz Republic	mirbek-es@yandex.ru
Republic of Tajikistan			
6	Dzhalolzoda Dzhamoliddin	Financier of IFAS, an expert on water economics in demo projects in Tajikistan	jamol.jalolzoda@gmail.com
Turkmenistan			
7	Saparmurat Charyev	Chief specialist of the International Water Cooperation Department of the Water Use Department of the State Water Committee of Turkmenistan	karayev994@gmail.com
Republic of Uzbekistan			
8	Ilkhom Zhuraev	Authorised Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)	i.u.jurayev@gmail.com
9	Nadir Gafurov	Head of Crop Water Consumption and Meteorology Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan	ngafurov020@gmail.com
ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPERTS FROM CENTRAL ASIA			
10	Bahkrom Gaforzoda	Secretary of the National Commission on Irrigation and Drainage of the Republic of Tajikistan (NCID), Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (ARI)	gbahrom_75@mail.ru
11	Kurbanbai Babazhanov	Head of the TWG from Uzbekistan, Head of the Division of Operation of Tuyamuyun hydroelectric complex	Тел.: +998975772453 Эл. почта: tuyamuyungu@minwater.uz
12	Adylkhan Tovasarov	General Director of Central Asian Institute for Environmental Research	adil@asianecology.kz
13	Merdan Karaev	Coordinator for the implementation of a cross -border demo project from Turkmenistan	karayev994@gmail.com
14	Merdan Nazarov	Head of Digital Technology Department, State Committee for Water Resources of Turkmenistan	karayev994@gmail.com
15	Mederbek Kanybek Uulu	3rd Secretary, Division of Water and Environmental Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyz Republic	k.mederbek@mail.ru
16	Georgiy Kurtovozov	National Expert in Turkmenistan	karayev994@gmail.com

17	Vanja Westerberg	Economist, International Consultant for Cost benefit analysis, consulting firm "Altus Impact"	vanja@altusimpact.com
18	Sanjay Giri	Hydraulic Engineer, consulting firm "Deltrares"	Sanjay.Giri@deltares.nl
19	Mariya Zadneprovskaya	Head of the Ecology Department of The Executive Board of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan	msuslova@inbox.ru
20	Zauresh Alimbetova	Director of the Barsakelmes Nature Reserve	barsakelmes1939@mail.ru
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS			
21	Takayoshi Kato	Environmental Economist, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	takayoshi.kato@oecd.org
22	Tatyana Leonova	Regional Development Advisor, World Bank	tleonova@worldbank.org
23	Ekaterina Strikeleva	Chief of Party, USAID Regional Water and Environment Activity	ekaterina.strikeleva@centralasia.wave.org
24	Dmitry Petrin	Senior Operations Officer, World Bank Central Asia	dpetrin@worldbank.org
25	Maira Karassayeva	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	karassam@ebrd.com
EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION			
26	Snejana Popova	Project Officer, Cooperation Unit, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan	Snejana.Popova@eeas.europa.eu
27	Tatiana Siegel-Rivera	Deputy Head of Finance and Contracts Division of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan	tatiana.siegel-rivera@ec.europa.eu
28	Marzhan Usenova	employee at the financial department, EU delegation to Kazakhstan	marzhan.usenova@eeas.europa.eu
29	Bayan Khalelova	Finance and Contracts Division, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan	bayan.khalelova@eeas.europa.eu
30	Michele Rescaldani	Programme Officer, EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic	Michele.RESCALDANI@eeas.europa.eu
CAREC TEAM			
31	Zafar Makhmudov	Executive Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)	zmakhmudov@carececo.org
32	Lyudmila Kiktenko	Programme Manager, CAREC	lkiktenko@carececo.org
33	Zebuniso Muminzoda	Project Coordinator in Tajikistan, Director of CAREC Country Office in Tajikistan	tajikistan@carececo.org
34	Irana Bagirova	Project Coordinator in Turkmenistan, Director of CAREC Country Office in Turkmenistan	ibagirova@carececo.org
35	Jahongir Azizov	Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, Director of CAREC Country Office in Uzbekistan	uzbekistan@carececo.org
36	Kuban Matraimov	Acting Director, CAREC Country Office in Kyrgyzstan	kmatraimov@carececo.org
37	Aksulu Kushanova	Energy Investment Specialist, CAREC	akushanova@carececo.org
38	Botagoz Smagulova	Info-PR specialist of Nexus project, CAREC	empinfo@carececo.org
39	Zamira Zholdaskyzy	Coordinator for development of Community of Practice and Network of Academia Society, CAREC	empspecialist1@carececo.org
40	Aizhan Kossantayeva	Specialist, Nexus project, CAREC	empspecialist@carececo.org
41	Dana Azhibayeva	Assistant of NEXUS Project, CAREC	empassistant@carececo.org