



Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia

Project Partner:	national ministries, related state agencies, water management organisations of Central Asian countries, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), UN Economic Commission for Europe, Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS), Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC)
Project Region:	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Project Term:	overall: April 2009 – December 2014 current phase: January 2012 – December 2014
Project Budget:	total: EUR 17 million (EUR 15 million: German Federal Foreign Office; EUR 2 million: European Union) current phase: EUR 7 million

Context

Central Asia is a region with scarce water resources, many of which cut across national borders. The various parties make intensive use of these resources, in particular to generate hydroelectricity and for irrigation.

The economies of five Central Asian states rely heavily on the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers as well as other transboundary river basins to meet their water needs. Because of this, they are mutually dependent. Having scarcely any raw materials for power generation upstream states (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) rely on hydropower for energy production in winter. At the same time, downstream countries (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan) mainly use water to irrigate cropland during the vegetation period.

Inappropriate management of water resources by users, such as waste of water and inefficient irrigation, exacerbates the situation. The environmental disaster of the Aral Sea, which is essentially an outcome of misguided irrigation policy, is emblematic of the precarious water situation in the region.

Scarce resources, inappropriate management and disparate interests – all these factors cause water distribution in Central Asia to harbour a major potential for tensions.

Programme

The German Federal Foreign Office has commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to help to enable the relevant institutions in the region to create sustainable regional water management structures, which take account of issues relating to water use as well as climate change issues and capacity building aspects. Effective water management and cross-border cooperation can contribute to stability and security and thus to sustainable economic development in Central Asia.

Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme implemented by GIZ is the most extensive part of the German Federal Foreign Office's Central Asia Water Initiative (the "Berlin Process"). The initiative supports Central Asian states in water management and aims at making water a subject of intensified transboundary cooperation. The Berlin Process is conceived of as a component of the EU strategy for a new partnership with Central Asia.

GIZ Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme also implements measures in the framework of the EU Regional Environmental Programme for Central Asia (EURECA). These activities are realised by the GIZ programme in partnership with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC).



Objectives

The primary goal of the programme is to set in train a process of political rapprochement in Central Asia that leads to closer cooperation in the use of the scarce water resources and may result in joint water management in the long-term.

The programme aims at fostering regional institutional cooperation. In particular institutions that regulate matters of water distribution in Central Asia, such as the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) or the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) are enhanced and their position in the political system is strengthened.

Principles of river basin management are introduced and applied in selected transboundary river basins in Central Asia to strengthen the transboundary river basin management. To this end capacity of water management organisations is being improved both on institutional and individual levels.

Measures and implementation

The programme implements measures on capacity building and provides technical support.

Personnel of the water management organisations in the selected transboundary river basins have trainings on basin principles, basin plan development and technical aspects. Stakeholder dialogues and regular meetings of the policy makers in water sector of partner countries are regularly conducted to ensure involvement of all sides.

Information materials on basin planning are developed and disseminated in the region. For best practices exchange between European and Central Asian water management organisations the programme will conduct international conference to initiate a professional network between water sector specialists from both regions.

As part of efforts aimed at fostering regional institutional cooperation GIZ jointly with UNECE have analysed legal and institutional conditions that govern the

Executive Committee of IFAS (EC IFAS). In cooperation with representatives from all five Central Asian states, proposals for strengthening EC IFAS as an institution have been drawn up.

EC IFAS and the five states together with GIZ, UNECE and other representatives of the international donor community have developed a comprehensive programme to improve water management within the Aral Sea Basin. This Third Aral Sea Basin Programme has been approved by all five states. GIZ jointly with UNECE aims to continue fostering regional institutional cooperation and support EC IFAS in its tasks to implement and monitor the Third Aral Sea Basin Programme as well as coordinate the engagement by the international donor community.

To complement capacity building measures GIZ implements selected pilot projects ranging from rehabilitating smaller dam safety systems to introducing water saving technologies and reconstructing traditional water supply systems.

Close coordination with the donor community at large as well as with the other projects under way as a part of the Berlin Process – especially with the Regional Research Network “Central Asian Water” (CAWa) and the German-Kazakh University (DKU) – is pivotal to the programme.



Programme Focus Basins

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