



Newsletter No. 1

"Promoting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Fostering Transboundary Dialogue in Central Asia" Joint EU and UNDP project

We are pleased to present you the first issue of the Newsletter of the project "Promoting IWRM and Fostering Transboundary Dialogue in Central Asia". Here you can learn more about the objectives, goals and achievements of the project.

About the Project in Brief

Duration:
2009 - 2012

Total Budget:
\$ 5,4 mln.

Main donors:
European Union (€ 1,5 mln.)

(The project is also supported by UNDP, The government of Finland and governments of the targeted Central Asian states)

Geography of the Project:
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

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Managers of the Project:



Natalia Alexeeva,
Water Programme Coordinator
for Central Asia, UNDP

Addressing the need in IWRM interventions on different levels and in changing context

IWRM concept is not very new in Central Asia, and this project is built on the relevant experience from other initiatives and implemented IWRM measures.

Growing population, increasing water scarcity and climate change are challenging current water management practices and approaches, and therefore we see IWRM as a continuing process of improving our understanding of water-related issues and providing relevant management and adaptive response in order to secure water-related needs emerging from different users and uses.

We aim at addressing key demands on local, national and regional levels via implementing IWRM principles and employing IWRM tools. The variety of project interventions is explained by the complexity of water management issues in Central Asia, and also by the need to integrate different types of water use under the IWRM umbrella.

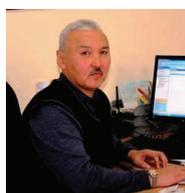
We hope this Newsletter would be a useful reading, and the project team would welcome all comments and feedback as it would help us to further improve its content.



Amirkhan Kenshimov,
National Manager,
UNDP Kazakhstan

Discussing the importance of the Ili-Balkhash Basin

This is a second largest inland water basin in Kazakhstan, which balances on the verge of ecological stability and retains relatively constant water levels. However, this fragile equilibrium might be destroyed due to the intensive exploitation of the Ili river both in China and Kazakhstan. The main reason why this water basin was selected as a site for our project is an aspiration to preserve the Balkhash Lake and its unique ecosystem, and prevent the repetition of the Aral Sea scenario.



Rysbek Apasov,
National Manager,
UNDP Kyrgyzstan

A Word on Plans and Perspectives

This year, our team in close collaboration with and direct participation of other international donors will continue to provide assistance to the re-established National Water Council and facilitate the Kyrgyz-Tajik dialogue on the use of the Isfara river sub-basin. We also plan activities on the major water objects of the country, in particular, exploring the condition of the dam on the Kirov reservoir and improvement of water accounting on the Chumysh hydropower complex.



Anatoliy Kholmatov,
National Manager,
UNDP Tajikistan

About the Priorities for the Year of 2011

We will continue to largely support the establishment of the Tajik National Water Council and the ongoing irrigation sector reform, in particular, the creation of water users associations (WUAS) in the Isfara region, and the inventory of the irrigation systems on the regional, national and basin levels. Also, we will actively strengthen the transboundary Kyrgyz-Tajik water cooperation in the Isfara area.

Project Components

This project was launched in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2009 and consists of three national components plus a regional dimension. It is being implemented by the Bratislava Regional Center for Europe and CIS, and UNDP offices in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The main objective is to assist the establishment of a more efficient water management system in each of the states and to facilitate regional and bilateral dialogues on water use and allocation between the neighbouring countries. This project relies on the paradigm that major water issues in the region should be tackled through gradual capacity and knowledge building and accumulation of mutual willingness of the countries to cooperate on the regional level.

Transboundary Dialogue and Cooperation in the Ili-Balkhash Basin



The main objective of the component is to strengthen the work of the joint Kazakh - Chinese Commission which is designed to carry out the management of the transboundary basins. Also, the component strives at improving the Plan on IWRM and engaging all relevant stakeholders in management and preservation of this important water system.

Development and Implementation of IWRM Strategies in Kyrgyzstan



Project is called upon to provide expertise in formulating improved methods of water management in the country and to implement demonstration sub-projects to display practical applications of the IWRM principles. In the framework of the project, the provision of assistance to Kyrgyz-Kazakh and Kyrgyz-Tajik transboundary water related initiatives is also foreseen.

Development and Implementation of IWRM Strategies in Tajikistan



This project's main idea is to support initiatives of the Tajik government in the water-related sectors aiming at a larger implementation of the IWRM principles in the country, in particular, a shift to the water basin management in the irrigation sector and the development of hydropower. Also, the project carries out a number of demonstration projects to showcase the application of IWRM principles in practice.

Fostering Transboundary Dialogue on the Regional Level



At the regional level, the project is aimed at providing a platform for regional dialogue on IWRM and complemented by capacity building measures, knowledge management and experience exchange support, as well as coordination of interventions. Another regional dimension explores adaptation to climate change as this issue has a direct impact on all water-related spheres. A joint project with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is launched to explore responses to climate change in the Chu-Talas River basin.

Steering Committees

The work of each component is coordinated and monitored by the Steering Committees which include representatives of the government, civil society and international organizations operating in the respective countries and on the regional level. Their main goal is to ensure that the project meets the local conditions and needs of the targeted countries and the whole region. The Regional Steering Committee determines strategic development of the project as a whole.

By 2011, with the support of the Kazakh Ministry of Agriculture two Steering Committee meetings of the Ili-Balkhash component have taken place: in June and in November 2010 in Astana. Following the agreements reached at the first meeting, a special

expert group of scientists was created to provide expertise to the joint Kazakh-Chinese Commission in the Ili-Balkhash Basin. Due to political instability in Kyrgyzstan, and political shifts in Tajikistan, first Steering Committee meetings in these countries were held with a delay. Tajik Committee first met in December 2010, while their Kyrgyz colleagues gathered in Bishkek in March 2011. First regional meeting was held in Almaty in November 2009, second - in June 2010 in Dushanbe, and it will be soon followed by a third meeting.



First Meeting of the Steering Committee in Kyrgyzstan was held on 1 March, 2011 in Bishkek

Workshop “Water Supply and Sanitation in Karabulak Village (Batken region, Kyrgyzstan) and Options for its Improvement”



The meeting with local water-users and authorities was held in May 2010 within the framework of Community Mobilization Campaign under the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Component.

The experts of the project presented evaluation of rural water supply and sanitation in the pilot area, recommendation on its improvement, in particular, state of water supply infrastructure and possible schemes for its improvement. Also, current situation in the Batken oblast/raion on sanitation, including sickness rate and clean drinking water supply was revised. The discussions with local population helped to better reveal sanitation-related problems in Karabulak village and ways to address these issues in a most effective way.

The local population showed a deep interest in supporting and strengthening the work of the project. Several crucial contributions were made on how to better meet the local conditions and needs of the people in the village.

The synopsis of the final report on the community mobilization campaign as well as the agenda and materials from the meeting are available for downloading on the website.

Trainings for water-users and local authorities in the border regions of Kazakhstan

From 13 to 16 of September 2010 the national component in Kazakhstan held trainings in the frontier districts of Kazakhstan on the border with China. Experts of the project visited Raimbek, Uygur and Panfilov districts. The agendas of the meetings included discussions on the current water management system in Kazakhstan, aspects of Water Code, principles of IWRM and ecological issues, such as preservation of water resources from pollution, drain and other threats.

International Conference “Integrated Water Resources Management in the Ili-Balkhash Basin: Joint Solutions and Perspectives”

In the light of the looming threat that the Balkhash Lake will repeat the fate of the Aral Sea, the needs of the Lake and its ecosystem become a number one priority and should be given full consideration in the discussions on water allocations. Also, during such debates, the distribution of water for other needs, including agriculture and industry should take place only after the amounts of ecological flow needed to maintain the optimal level of the Lake, is defined.

These are the main conclusions of the international conference “Integrated Water Resources Management in the Ili-Balkhash Basin: Joint Solutions and Perspectives”, which was held on 11 and 12 October 2010 in Almaty. This event was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, EU and OSCE.



Upon the conclusion of the conference, the final resolution was adopted which contains recommendations to key institutions on how to strengthen their efforts to preserve the Lake and its ecosystem. The full version of this document you may find on our website: www.centralasia.iwlearn.org

National Training on the Integrated Water Resources Management and Negotiations for Sustainable Development in Tajikistan

The training was held from 26 to 28 October 2010 and was organized with support of the Ministry for Land Reclamation and Water Resources and OSCE Office in Tajikistan.

The training was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Energy and Industry, Joint Stock

Holding Company “Barki Tojik”, State Administration of the Hydrometeorological Service, Tajik Branch of the Board of International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, Tajikistan Agro-Industrial Union and other organizations.

The highly qualified national and international consultants were invited to conduct the training. Also, most innovative communication technologies and up-to-date information materials were employed. Upon completion of the training all participants received corresponding certificates.



The opening of the national training was attended by Mr. Anvar Zoirov, Deputy Minister of Land Reclamation and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Ivar Vickie, Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, Ms. Zahira Virani, Deputy Country Director, United Nations Development Programme in Tajikistan

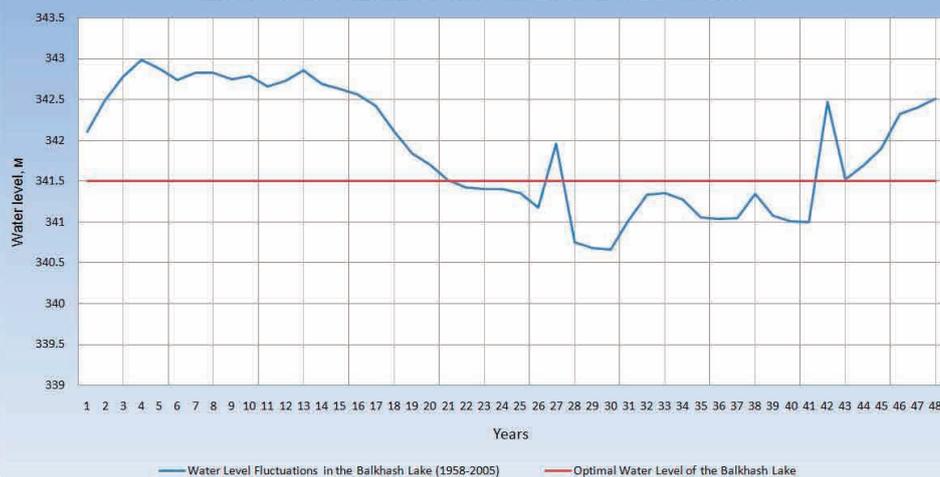
Workshop “Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management in Kyrgyzstan”

National workshop “Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in Kyrgyzstan” was held on December 16, 2010 in Bishkek. It was organized within the framework of the project “Development and Implementation of IWRM Strategies in Kyrgyzstan” with the support of the EU, UNDP, and State Committee of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The participants of the event, i.e. representatives of the Water and Melioration State Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, its regional institutions, NGOs, representatives of EU, UNDP, Helvetas, discussed the importance and methods of further modernisation of water management schemes through continuous incorporation of IWRM principles.

In 2011 similar workshops on trans-boundary water use, international water law, and other relevant problems will be organized in the framework of the project.

Water Level Fluctuations in the Balkhash Lake(1958-2005)



Balkhash Lake (Balkhash-Alakol Hollow, Kazakhstan)

Altitude: 341,5 m

Length: 605 km

Width: from 9 to 74 km

Size: 16,400 km²

Volume: 112 km³

Coastline length: 2 385 km

Depth: 26 m

Average depth: 5,8 m

Volume Surface: 413,000 km³

Inlets: Ili, Karatal, Aksu, Lepsy, Ayaguz

This graph in the pdf format is available for downloading on our website: www.centralasia.iwlearn.org

Documents

The following documents are currently available on our website:

1. Resolution of the International Conference “Integrated Water Resources Management in the Ili-Balkhash Basin: Joint Solutions and Perspectives” in Russian and English.

These recommendations may serve as an excellent source of information for elaborating different solutions connected to the development of water related sectors, water distribution among different economic actors in the area, preservation of the Ili-Balkhash ecosystem and the country in general.

2. All materials from the National Training on the Integrated Water Resources Management and Negotiations for Sustainable Development in Tajikistan. (27-28 October 2010 r., Tajikistan).

3. All materials from the Workshop “Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management in Kyrgyzstan”. (16 December 2010 r., Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan).

4. Final report on support to IWRM and Investment Strategies, Plans and Financial Policies in Kyrgyzstan in English and Russian.

5. Materials of the Workshop “Water Supply and Sanitation in Karabulak Village (Batken region, Kyrgyzstan) and Options for Its Improvement” and

6. Synopsis of the Final Report on Community Mobilization Consulting Campaign under the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Component.

Objective: Capacity building of drinking water users association (CDWUA) in the village of Kara-Bulak, Batken oblast to provide access to clean water to rural community.

World Water Day



International World Water Day is held annually on 22 March. World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of freshwater, this year it is Water for Cities, in order to respond to the urban challenge.

Kazakhstan will also take part in the worldwide celebrations. A workshop for journalists will be organized on 18 March in Almaty by several UN agencies to raise public awareness on major issues with respect to water in the country and disseminate information about the existing challenges in this sector.

Ms. Aitjamal Tleulesova, Expert of the National Component “Transboundary Dialogue and Cooperation in the Ili-Balkhash Basin” will give a presentation on the current situation in this area and preservation methods of this water system.

Contact Information

“Promoting IWRM and Fostering Transboundary Dialogue in Central Asia”

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Website

www.centralasia.iwlearn.org

The website is designed to provide most recent information about the project as it unfolds. There you can learn first-hand about the coming and hosted events, trainings, seminars, workshops, download reports, working papers and other publications.