



Regional Water, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Strengthening Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Water Cooperation in Central Asia – Blue Peace



Lake Sarez

Rationale

The Blue Peace Central Asia Initiative started in 2017 in response to the interest of Central Asian countries expressed at high-level conferences, such as the Basel Conference on Integrated Water Resources Management (2014) and the Almaty Scientific Conference (2016).

Water is key for food and energy security in the region. Nearly 80 percent of the 75 million residents of Central Asia share two major transboundary rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, which together form the Aral Sea Basin. These two rivers feed the Aral Sea, which has shrunk by 90 percent over the past 50 years. They also provide the vast majority of water resources to this arid/semi-arid region. More than 90 percent of water resources are used for irrigated agriculture to generate approximately 30 percent of GDP and provide employment to more than 60 percent of the population of the region. Water is equally important for energy production, with hydropower accounting for nearly 30 percent of the total electricity consumed in Central Asia.

The current insufficient levels of cooperation in water management entail significant costs, estimated at USD 4.5 billion of economic losses a year for the region, and major risks for sustainable development. Climate change and population growth will put more strains on water resources.

Country:

Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

Duration:

2017 – 2023

Total Budget:

CHF 6'000'000

Partners:

Five Central Asia countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), Afghanistan, and other development partners

Executing Agency:

Self-implemented / CAREC

Objectives and activities

The Blue Peace Central Asia Initiative aims to support Central Asia countries in establishing a system of shared benefits for water resources allocation (sanitation and drinking water, irrigation, energy, and environment) that accommodates the interests of upstream and downstream countries equitably and sustainably.

The overall objective of the program is that Central Asia moves forward towards sustainable and equitable transboundary water management in a changing climate, whereby the people in the region benefit from water security, peace, stability and sustainable development through increased resilience and intergovernmental dialogue.

The project pursues the following outcomes and envisaged results

The BPCA initiative is built along three pillars:

- a diplomatic and policy pillar, supporting riparian states in their dialogue to jointly and systemically manage the shared large river basins.
- an operational pillar, to enhance the trust between riparian states by supporting evidence-based dialogues and providing knowledge resource to implement concrete solutions.
- a youth pillar, geared towards strengthening the youth of Central Asia as agents of change, and preparing the next generation of water professionals in a river basin perspective.

The flagship project CICADA continues its successful contribution to an improved information basis for the region (glacier monitoring providing i.a. data for water runoff and disaster modelling).

Target groups

Transboundary water management institutions, national and local authorities, environmental bodies, young water professionals, water users, overall population.

Key results achieved so far

- Strengthened evidence-based policy dialogue through high-quality studies, based on the narrative of the benefits of cooperation.
- Communities of practice enhance cooperation in transboundary water management through:
 - Knowledge exchange and facilitated dialogue on political and technical issues;
 - Demonstration projects on water cooperation based on demand of riparian states and/or stakeholders;
 - Exchange on water quality standards and monitoring, and water efficiency;
 - Improved sharing of hydrometeorology data and joint use of forecast modelling;
- Enhanced capacity of young water professionals through scholarships and strengthened IWRM water diplomacy curricula in academic institutes to empower youth voices and increase networks' engagement in water and climate change dialogue at the regional and global levels.

Contact:

Embassy of Switzerland

Shota Rustaveli Street,
Impasse 1, House 4
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Tel.: +998 78 120 54 54
tashkent@eda.admin.ch
www.eda.admin.ch/tashkent

printed in May 2023