



# A Source of Peace – Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia

Improving IWRM planning at the Aral-Syrdarya Basin Organisation

## Context

The Aral-Syrdarya basin is part of the Aral Sea basin and is therefore particularly affected by the process of desiccation occurring there. Despite the best efforts of the Kazakh government and international donors, it is doubtful that the Aral basin’s environmental problems can be reversed.

The Kazakh Aral-Syrdarya basin stretches across the Kyzylorda and the South Kazakhstan Oblasts (administrative districts). It occupies an area of about 345,000 square kilometres and is home to about 2.6 million people (17% of the total population of the Kazakh Republic). The basin’s main river is the Syrdarya, which is formed outside Kazakhstan in the Fergana Valley by the confluence of the Naryn and Karadarya rivers.

Partners:	Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), Aral-Syrdarya Basin Inspection, Syrdarya Basin Council, Committee for Water Resources
Project term:	Jul. 2010 – Aug. 2011
Budget:	109,998 Euro

One of the most pressing problems is the lack of appropriate monitoring and management of irrigation systems and water resources. The respective institutions often lack the capacity to carry out comprehensive basin assessments, meaning no proper basin planning takes place to manage different water use levels and timeframes.

Consequently, a more systematic approach to water management is required for this situation to improve. To that end, Kazakhstan has been the first country in Central Asia to prepare a National Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Water Efficiency Plan. At present the Committee for Water Resources, River Basin Inspections (RBI) and other stakeholders are working to prepare and implement cross-sector IWRM planning, especially at river basin level. The resulting management plans should be based on real need and take into account the socio-economic status of the basin. Lower tiers of management must then work to deliver these general management plans.



The Kok-Aral dam separates the smaller northern Aral Sea from the larger southern Aral Sea

## Objective

The programme is supporting the five Central Asian states to set up effective institutions for the joint management of water resources. In order for these institutions to effectively fulfil their mandates, assistance is being provided to develop long-term basin plans, which then serve as the basis for introducing IWRM principles.

In Kazakhstan the programme is helping the Aral-Syrdarya Basin Inspection and the Syrdarya Basin Council to develop and implement a comprehensive basin plan to promote IWRM at river basin level. To that end, it is developing the capacities of both individuals and institutions.





Syr darya river near Kyzylorda city

Next, the plan itself will be developed. The project team will build and roll out a database and irrigated area map for the Kazakh Aral-Syrdarya basin to enable the Basin Inspection to undertake comprehensive analyses and draft short term (10 years) and long term (25 to 40 years) basin development plans.

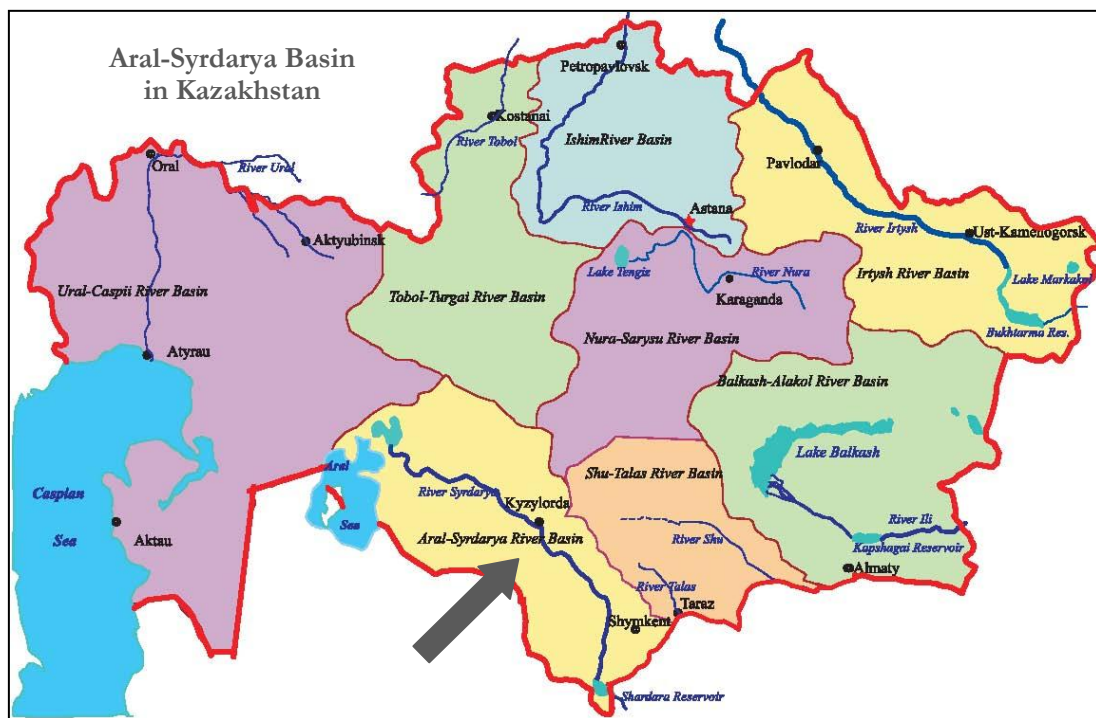
Finally, the IWRM plan will be submitted to the Basin Council for approval.

## Measures

The project consists of various interrelated capacity building activities. Firstly, the Basin Inspection and Basin Council will identify their capacity building needs for preparing and implementing a basin plan and will prioritise the steps needed to deliver IWRM. The project will then provide the training, tools and instruments required for developing these basin plans.



An irrigation canal in the Aral-Syrdarya basin



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Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15  
E info@giz.de  
I www.giz.de

### Contact

Alexandr Nikolayenko  
Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Dostyk ave. 280  
050020 Almaty, Kazakhstan  
T +7 777 551 98 99  
E Alexandr.Nikolayenko@giz.de

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