



Implemented by:



Water Management and Basin Organisations in Central Asia

Introducing the basin planning approach to the Cepekyab sub-basin in Turkmenistan

Context

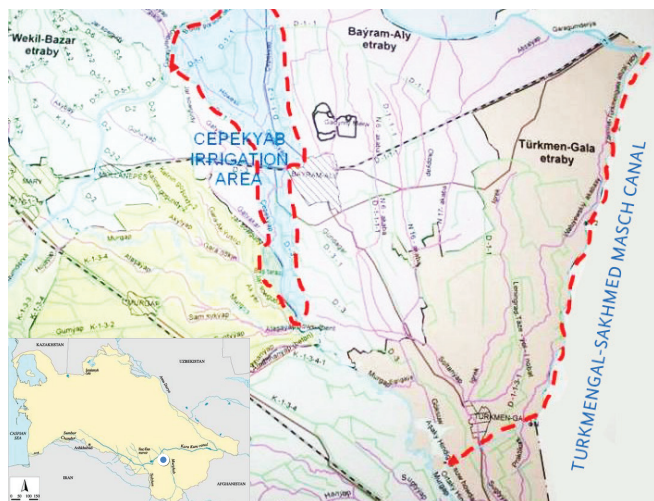
The EU project 'Water Management and Basin Organisations in Central Asia' (WMBOCA) is being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (German Society for International Cooperation). WMBOCA aims to build capacity in regional water cooperation and sustainable water resources management in smaller transboundary river basins.

Moreover, WMBOCA activities focus on the introduction of the basin approach, for which the EU Water Framework Directive is the guiding concept. In Turkmenistan, the focus is on the Murgab River, due to its transboundary nature and the typical structure of water resources, irrigation, agriculture and settlements. The main stakeholders, such as the Ministries of Water Economy, of Nature Protection, of Communal Services, of Finance, and of Economy as well as the Hydro-Meteorological Survey, are supported in applying basin management and planning approaches.

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| Project name | Water Management and Basin Organisations in Central Asia (WMBOCA) |
| Funded by | European Union Co-funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) |
| Project region | Cepekyab sub-basin, Mary velayat, Turkmenistan |
| Main partners | Ministry of Water Economy of Turkmenistan, Marysuwhojalyk (the branch of the Ministry of Water Economy in Mary velayat), Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) |
| Duration | September 2013 – February 2014 |

Objective

Pilot testing of the basin planning approach in the Cepekyab sub-basin started in September 2013 and was completed in February 2014. Its primary objective was to test basin planning procedures in a smaller sub-basin. The Cepekyab sub-basin is an irrigation scheme of approximately 9,000 ha which is situated in Mary velayat. It includes six settlements functioning as bases for *dekhan* (farming) enterprises. The primary result expected from this pilot testing was the verification of the approach's relevance in the context of the further preparation and implementation of the basin plan for the Murgab basin. Moreover, the pilot testing procedures aimed at supporting the development of basin planning capacities among water specialists and other state stakeholders of water-related areas. The goal was that they would better exercise the river basin planning approach in their areas of responsibility by the time Turkmenistan's new Water Code, including IWRM elements is ratified.



The Cepekyab sub-basin (east of Mary Town)



L. to r.:

- 1) The Cepekyab Canal
- 2) National stakeholder dialogue on the pilot testing of basin planning in the Cepekyab sub-basin

Measures

The pilot testing consisted of two stages. The first stage involved the compilation of a comprehensive analysis and an assessment of the sub-basin conditions. In the second stage, the testing results were presented at a national stakeholder dialogue in Mary velayat. The aim of the dialogue was to assist water-related state agencies and specialists with decision-making in the context of the use of basin planning procedures in Turkmenistan. These measures were funded by WMOCA. Budget of WMOCA activities in four Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) consists of approximately EUR 2 million provided by the European Union and approximately EUR 0.5 million provided by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Results

The diagnosis carried out in the Cepekyab sub-basin focused on the analysis of general water resources in consideration of hydro-technical facilities, irrigation mode, administration, agricultural cropping, dwelling, health and ecological conditions. Different aspects relating to improvement of water resources management in the sub-basin were considered, such as:

- Function of technical irrigation facilities and technique
- Water-saving technology (including water pipes instead of open canals)
- Losses from infiltration
- Utilisation of drainage water by means of water-mixing technology
- Levelling of fields
- Re-growing of newly developed crop seeds

- Reintroduction of crop rotation
- Reduction of cotton-growing areas
- Re-arranging the pattern of agricultural plots with the aim of reducing the demand for water and energy

Upon the completion of testing, a stakeholder dialogue involving representatives of state ministries and agencies took place. The goal of the dialogue was to present and discuss the water resource situation and relevant problems in the Cepekyab sub-basin. Furthermore, in accordance with the ongoing draft amendment of the Water Code, the dialogue aimed at developing the basin planning capacities of participants. Based on the report on pilot testing, the participants were encouraged to prioritise the main issues in the sub-basin using various ranking and prioritisation instruments.

The dialogue proved to be effective. It emphasised the need to apply basin-related analysis and management not only in the Cepekyab sub-basin. Through comprehensive basin analysis and planning, the present water resources situation can be evaluated and strategic objectives laid out with the aim of improving water management. The results of the pilot testing confirmed that basin planning goes beyond the consideration of improved irrigation measures, encompassing the integrative diagnosis of ecological, health-related and social aspects of water resources. This will require new formats of cooperation between the various state institutions responsible for these sectors.

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