

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

## Joint management of the Isfara transboundary river basin

### Context

The Isfara River and its catchment are located in the south-western Ferghana valley. The river originates in Kyrgyzstan on the northern slopes of the Turkestan Range and flows northwards into the territory of Tajikistan through the Ferghana valley towards the Syr Darya. The total catchment area is approximately 3,900 km<sup>2</sup>; the total area of irrigated land amounts to approximately 265 km<sup>2</sup> (80 km<sup>2</sup> in Kyrgyzstan and 185 km<sup>2</sup> in Tajikistan).

The catchment belongs to Batken Oblast in Kyrgyzstan and Sughd Oblast in Tajikistan and includes Uzbek territories at the tail-end of the basin. The population of Batken Oblast is mainly ethnic Kyrgyz, with a large Tajik and a smaller Uzbek minority. The cross-border relationship is a particular issue as the Isfara catchment includes the Tajik enclave of Vorukh inside Kyrgyz territory. Water resources in the transboundary basin are vital for all stakeholders as well as for the environment. Integrated and coordinated management of this transboundary resource positively affects the lives of approximately 300,000 people living in the Isfara basin as well as its environment.

### Objectives

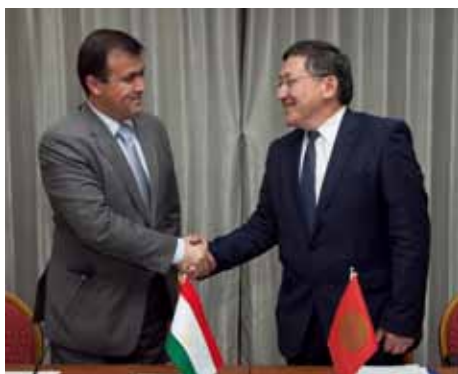
The objectives of this project are the human and institutional capacity development of Kyrgyz and Tajik partners to manage the Isfara's transboundary river basin. In particular, the activities aim at the institutionalisation of transboundary water management processes as well as capacity building for a basin approach that includes integrated water management, monitoring, planning, etc.

Project name	Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia
Commissioned by	German Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)
Project region	Isfara river basin on the territories of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Batken Oblast, Kyrgyzstan; Sughd Oblast, Tajikistan)
Main partners	Ministry of Amelioration and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan and Department of Water Management and Melioration at the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic, local water management organisations (Batken and Sughd Oblasts), Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)
Duration	January 2009 – December 2014

### Measures

To support the establishment of administrative structures, the project since 2009 has endorsed the development and implementation of a framework agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on cooperation on their transboundary rivers. This framework agreement shall form the basis for coordinated planning and administration in the water sector between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The programme promotes an integrated approach to water resources management in the Isfara river basin with an outreach to the national level. Representatives of local water management organisations receive training on principles of river basin planning and management as well as related technical aspects.



The Heads of the Kyrgyz-Tajik inter-ministerial working group jointly concluded the text for a Framework Agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan (left: First Deputy Minister of Amelioration and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr Rakhimov; right: Deputy Head of the Department of Water Management and Melioration, Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr Dzhailoobaev).

This ensures capacity development relevant to the drafting of a basin plan for the Kyrgyz and Tajik parts of the Isfara River. Since 2012, these activities have been co-funded by the European Union project *Water Management and Basin Organisations in Central Asia*.

With regard to technical measures, the programme provides support to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with the establishment of a data base and rehabilitation works on water infrastructure. The latter includes, for instance, construction measures to improve the existing dam safety monitoring system of Tortgul dam as well as the redevelopment of the Isfara city headwork.

At the level of the inter-ministerial working group meeting, the draft framework agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was agreed and is expected to be signed by end 2013. This agreement will regulate the establishment of joint institutions for basin planning and related processes. Furthermore, it envisages cooperation on joint development plans for the shared river basins, measures on adaptation to climate change and joint development of investment projects. It also sets the basis for cooperation on hydro-technical facilities and their influence on water sharing in the transboundary river basins as well as joint protection of land and infrastructure from natural hazards.

To ensure the availability of accurate and transparent data on water resources, the programme also supported the rehabilitation of flow monitoring stations (hydro-posts) and the development of a database as part of the reporting system and helped to set up database workspaces at the local water management organisations.

In this regard, trainings organised by the programme have improved the skills of partners in processing digital data for an effective basin planning, to be finished by 2014. The first outcomes were land use maps, mudflow hazard maps and flood hazard maps for the draft basin catchment border of the Isfara River. Representatives of local water management organisations are being supported in the drafting of the basin plan involving stakeholders from other state agencies representing related



*Isfara river basin.*

sectors such as environmental protection, flood control, drinking water supply, etc. Civil society stakeholders will be represented at respective fora to provide their inputs into the drafting of the basin plan.

Technical measures on water infrastructure as well as data management on national level ensure safe, fair and transparent water allocation for water users in the region.

The programme closely coordinates its activities in the Isfara river basin with other international organisations.

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