



Amu Darya Basin Network – Conference Call 4

23 February 2011, 11:00-12:30, EastWest Institute (EWI), Brussels

March 11, 2011

Introduction

This conference call, first call in the New Year, was organized with a purpose to further develop ideas generated during the past meetings of the Amu Darya Basin Network (ADBN) and establish goals for 2011.

The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Overfeld (EWI). He and other participants welcomed in particular the new members from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and expressed their satisfaction at the participation of Mr. Manville from the French Ministry of Foreign and Europeans affairs. (Full list of participants is given in the Annex of these summary notes.)

The Chair introduced Ms. Joelle Rizk, the new project coordinator in the Regional Security Team of EWI. Ms. Joelle Rizk informed members about the status of the conference report, thanking the participants for their contribution to the report and announced that the report would be distributed in the following week.

Summary of discussed points

Participants agreed to focus the work of the Network on:

- Facilitating and developing priorities for capacity building towards sustainable water management in the region;
 - In this regard, Members agreed to do a mapping of leading relevant training programs/institutions, networking/coordination institutions, and donors in the field of water management in the region;
- Facilitating policy exchange initiatives to that end and linking Afghan, Central Asian, and international policymakers and researchers;
- Expansion of the Amu Darya Basin Network to include institutional members as well; such as SIC ICWC, CAREWIB project (SDC, ICWC, EEC UN), Karakalpakistan Academy of Science.
- Expansion of the Amu Darya Basin Network to include members from relevant government and non-government institutions from all riparian countries.
- To realize these objectives and to achieve a greater impact in the region, participants agreed that the Amu Darya Basin Network needs to develop a clear plan of action for the next six months;

- Exploration of new funding opportunities to sustain the activities of the Network in the long run was equally considered vital.
- Conference calls will play a crucial role in developing this plan. Therefore, it was agreed that they should take place in regular intervals of six weeks. The next call was scheduled for April 7, 2011.
- Participants agreed further that the website of the Network remains an essential part of the process of knowledge sharing and distribution. Participants welcomed that the website will now be in the responsibility of EWI and expressed their expectation that it would develop into a vital and effective information and coordination tool for Amu Darya River Basin related activities. They pledged their support to make active contributions in that regard.
- EWI explained that access to articles suggested on the website is limited due to Copyright regulations that prohibit dissemination of full articles EWI does not have legal permission of distribution of articles published by other institutes.
- EWI expressed readiness to examine a translation into Russian of at least crucial parts of the website. The secretariat will also be taking into consideration the necessity of Russian language in the organization of future events.

Details of discussion

A) Scope of action in capacity building:

There is abundance of players in the capacity building field in Central Asia and Afghanistan. To avoid repetition of focus and mandates, ADBN will concentrate on coordination and facilitation of the capacity development rather than implementation of such processes and activities. ADBN will work on facilitation of research grants for local researchers, establishing links to exchange programs and facilitation of trainings and workshops.

B) Existing initiatives and needs in the field of capacity development:

Major capacity development initiatives in the region identified by participants were: German-Kazakh University, EcoGIS Center of Wageningen University and Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration, UNESCO-IHE and the University of Kabul, OSCE Academy in Bishkek, distant academic institutions (e.g. E-academy)¹.

The Wageningen University informed that it is in a process of obtaining an approval from the Government of Uzbekistan on the establishment of a Resource Center within Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration. Ways of including Afghan partners to such initiatives should actively be explored by the Network. The work of UNESCO-IHE that is now working with a University of Kabul could serve as an example to bringing Afghans on board.

The Network members should also look into possibilities to promote exchange of students between Europe and Central Asia/Afghanistan and in particular between Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. Similar programs existed in early 1990s when about 600 students per year from Afghanistan used to study in Central Asian countries. However, these programs had stopped due to unrest and instability in Afghanistan. A revival appeared highly useful to participants.

¹ For a detailed list of the existing capacity development initiatives in the region, please see Annex B of the Policy Brief "Capacity development for regional cooperation in the Amu Darya river basin" (<http://www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/policy-brief.pdf>).

In this regard, one participant outlined that current funds to promote exchange are mostly tied for mobility to Europe and not within the region. Nevertheless, the network should lobby for funds to be directed to mobility between regional countries and try to develop proposals in that regard.

C) Identification of target groups for capacity development

The identification and prioritization of target groups (Experts, practitioners, BSc, MSc, PhD, Postdoc, etc.) is a very important step. Participants, agreed on Master Degree students and above as main target group.

In addition, participants emphasized the need for more exchange of researchers and re-training of experts in the field, i.e. to achieve effective regional networking. They also highlighted the need to facilitate research grants for local experts and practitioners, where applied research results would feed ongoing projects and fill existing information gaps.

The initiatives being referred to above and discussed by the Network members should be incorporated into the development component of the currently submitted Third Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-3). Participants agreed to explore this avenue actively.

Members agreed further to do a mapping of relevant top three training programs/institutions, networking/coordination institutions, and donors in the field of water management in the region. The Secretariat was requested to be in touch with the Network members to approach the members regarding the relevant information.

D) Linking Afghan, Central Asian, and international policymakers and researchers

Currently, the Network has members mainly from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. At the same time, the Network has more experts than policymakers. Therefore, widening the Network to include members from all the riparian countries, as well as to include policymakers was considered crucial.

Information points

E) Amu Darya Basin Network website (www.amudaryabasin.net)

The website continues to be an essential part of the Network. Since the DPRN Process, within which the network and the website were created, has finished, the website will now become a part of EastWest Institute. Novelties that will be introduced to the website were presented by Mr. Dragan Stojanovski, the Communications Officer of the EastWest Institute:

- Monthly Spotlight that includes a monthly poll question, which would be stored into an online archive as months pass; The Spotlight is a short article or reflection presented by a member or by the secretariat. It tackles a particular issues (at choice) of development, management, environment and others in relevance to the situation in the Amu Darya Basin Network. It will be accompanied with a polling question for the visitors of the website to answer.
- Experts page, where biographies of our experts are posted, along with their publications or links to them;
- Yearly Calendar of international events on water in relation to water cooperation and/or Amu Darya Basin;
- Interactive zones such as commentaries, online debates ...

- A contact-us box that would allow visitors to easily get in touch with the network
- Connection to social media networks;
- List of past, and ongoing projects in the Amu Darya Basin, with input from the members;
- *(Suggestions can be added by members)*
- *Simple and not overloaded too much with different information, keeping it to the relevant to Amu Darya Basin.*

F) Various proposals

Mr. Manville, representative from the French Foreign Ministry briefed participants about the results of the first G8 Afghanistan Task Forces meeting, held in Paris on 11th February 2011, as follows:

- The meeting confirmed the options of the French Presidency Initiative for the Prosperity of the Border Regions (IPBR/IPRF) based around four themes (water, rail, energy, human resources) and its six related actions, following on from the Canadian Presidency's initiative in 2010 (APBRPI).
- **On Theme 1, Water: "Regional cooperation in information and management of water resources and transboundary water basins" (IPBR Theme 1 Action 1)**, Mr. Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), expressed the wish that the G8 support an enlargement of the membership of the Helsinki Convention and the ratification of its Additional Protocol, opening up cooperation with neighbours from Central Asia (Afghanistan, China, etc.). The conclusions of the meeting were cautiously optimistic as regards the possibilities for better cooperation on this theme, which remains especially difficult and sensible.
- Overall, the outline of the G8/2011 timetable announced for theme 1, based around a series of expert level meetings (IPBR, Theme 1, Action 1) seems to have been well received by participants:
- The G8 French Presidency welcomes other ideas which could help the G8 to reach the intended targets.

G) Next Meeting

It was proposed that the subsequent meetings of the Amu Darya Basin Network take place in an interval of 6 weeks. Therefore the next meeting will be held in April 7, 2011 (exact date and time to be confirmed).

Summary of Action Points Agreed

Activities	By whom	By when
Development of a 6-months action plan	Secretariat & Members	
Development of Concept note, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision and mission statements - Identification of target groups and areas of work (in 	Network secretariat & Network	

relation transboundary water management and regional cooperation)	members	
Expansion of the Amu Darya Basin Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggestions of Afghan, Kyrgyz and Turkmen experts to the network - Invitation of EC IFAS and BWO "Amu Darya" - More suggestions of relevant organizations 	Network secretariat & Network members	
Mapping relevant institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request each participant to send top 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Donors o Training programs/institutions (with relevant MSc, PhD, and PostDoc curricula existing on water) o Networking/Coordination institutions o <i>Other suggestions/elements that can be included in the mapping exercise</i> - Based on the short list, the Network could work towards collaboration, if there is a common agreement 	Network members	March 25, 2011
Website ADBN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send comments on the new elements being introduced in the website - Look into resources and solution for the Russian translation of the website and its content 	Network members	
Send feedback to the summary notes	Network members	COB March 25, 2011
Calendar of events	Network secretariat	
Send conference report		

**CONFERENCE CALL OF THE AMU DARYA BASIN NETWORK
WEDNESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2011, 11:00-12:30 (CEST)**

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda;**
- 2. Short overview of previous activities by representative of the EastWest Institute;**
- 3. Amu Darya Basin Network: next steps**
 - a. Identifying priorities, the role of the Network, and target groups
 - i. Funding
 - b. Identifying and setting clear goals
 - i. Facilitate Capacity Development in the Amu Darya Basin
 - ii. Linking Researchers and Policymakers:
 - o Linking researchers and policy makers within Central Asia and Afghanistan
 - o Linking researchers between Central Asian/Afghanistan with International experts and researchers
 - o Linking policy makers across regions
 - c. Way forward
 - i. Regional Center of Excellence as a Centre linking different existing organizations (e.g. SIC ICWC, REC, GWP CACENA, and etc.)
 - ii. Regional Center of Excellence as a Centre providing trainings to MSc, PhDs
- 4. Presentation of the website of the Amu Darya Basin Network**
 - a. New logo
 - b. New layout design
 - c. New website mapping (professional and user-friendly)
 - d. Better layout of the content
 - e. Additions (photos, comment box for visitors; Google maps)
- 5. Next steps**
 - a. Development of a work plan, mandate, vision, mission for the ADBN (*based on the outcomes from this call* (latest date:)
 - b. Upcoming conference calls

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Joined via the telephone conference:

1. **Dr. Iskandar Abdullaev**, Regional Advisor, Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia (Programme), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
2. **Prof. Viktor Dukhovny**, Director of Scientific Information Centre, Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
3. **Prof. Abdulhamid Kayumov**, Professor, Scientific Consultant and Specialist of Climate Change Project, Tajik Hydrometeorological Center, Tajikistan
4. **Dr. Farhad Mukhtarov**, Senior Researcher, Environmental Policy Analysis Group, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
5. **Dr. Alim Pulatov**, Head of EcoGIS joint Center (Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration and Wageningen University), Executive Secretary of Consortium of Agricultural Universities of Central Asia and South Caucasus
6. **Dr. Neimatullo Safarov**, CBD and CPB National Focal Point, National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center, Tajikistan
7. **Mr. Joop de Schutter**, Deputy Director a.i., UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Delft, the Netherlands
8. **Dr. Kai Wegerich**, Researcher, Water Policy and Institutions, International Water Management Institute, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
9. **Mrs. Ewa Wietsma**, International Project Manager, Department of Environmental Sciences, Centre for Water and Climate, Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands

Present in person in EWI's Brussels Office:

10. **Mr. Jos Boonstra**, Senior Researcher, FRIDE, Spain
11. **Mr. Brad Basseur**, Project Assistant Regional Security, EastWest Institute
12. **Ms. Guljamal Jumamuratova**, Project Assistant, Amu Darya Basin Network
13. **Mr. Yves Manville**, Conseiller, Rédacteur Afghanistan à la cellule Afghanistan-Pakistan (AFPAK), Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France
14. **H.E. Ambassador Guenter Overfeld**, Vice President and Director for Regional Security and Preventive Diplomacy, EastWest Institute
15. **Ms. Joelle Rizk**, Programme Coordinator, EastWest Institute
16. **Dr. Jenniver Sehring**, Political Adviser to the EUSR for Central Asia, Council of the European Union, Brussels, Belgium
17. **Mr. Dragan Stojanovski**, Communications Coordinator, EastWest Institute
18. **Mr. Michael Zumot**, Assistant to Vice President Regional Security, EastWest Institute