

Amu Darya Basin Network – Conference Call 5 **20 April 2011, 12:00-13:30, EastWest Institute (EWI), Brussels**

20 April 2011

Introduction

The fifth conference call of the members of the Amu Darya Basin Network was held on 20 April 2011. This meeting was first in its series to tackle thematic issues; the meeting discussed capacity development issues in the Amu Darya river basin, and strategies to overcoming these issues.

Please consult the agenda and list of participants for more details.

The short outline of the discussions is provided below:

Summary of discussed points

- Review of the previous conference call's action points:
 - Mapping of leading relevant training programs/institutions, networking and coordination institutions and donors:
 - The participants were encouraged to share relevant information as only limited information was shared by the Network members.
 - Expansion of the Amu Darya Basin Network will continue soon after the Project Document is approved by members.
 - Exploration of new funding opportunities to sustain the activities of the Network in the period beyond 2011 is important. Next to the conference calls, meetings of the Network members in person are equally important, thus research of funding possibilities for the meetings is needed.
- Project Document of the Amu Darya Basin Network:
 - Target groups identified important during the call are:
 - Young/local researchers
 - Current professionals from research institutes
 - The Project Document with the incorporated comments will be shared with the participants for their final review and approval.
- Policy Brief on Capacity Development “Empowering and developing local capacities”
 - Comments and inputs on the policy brief:
 - **Structure** of the Brief looks interesting; however, in its current format, it discusses too many issues. Thus, the Brief outline needs to be more focused;
 - Suggested points to address in the policy brief:

- To select universities and research organizations, and to discuss, in particular, the eroding capacities of the existing Universities and research organizations;
- To empower the capacities of local staffs on data analysis, and to increase their understanding on why a certain research is being conducted.
- Women and people at local level; however, these two points cannot be addressed at this time due to the fact that they are not currently the focus of the ADBN;
- Identify key skills that are needed to be promoted, and skills needed across different levels?
- Research capacities of local researchers as compared to international researchers
- Creation of economic incentives for the teachers and researchers to stay in Universities or research institutes to train others
- The Policy Brief will be updated with the suggested comments and inputs, and will be shared with the participants
- The policy brief will be enhanced together with members' inputs, and will be finalized in the next conference call
- Additional information:
 - The website of the Amu Darya Basin Network is being updated, and new features will be available in the coming 2 weeks time.
 - The next Conference call is to be held on the third week of June. The exact date will be shared by the Network secretariat.

Details of discussion

REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS CONFERENCE CALL'S ACTION POINTS:

A) Mapping of existing capacity development projects and proposed ideas and initiatives:

On the mapping of leading relevant training programs/institutions, networking and coordination institutions and donors, the participants informed:

- WUR double degree Master programs in Environmental Sciences (MES), International Land and Water Management (MIL), Geo-Information Sciences (MGI);
- Erasmus Mundus programs that encourage students to study abroad; currently, four Central Asian countries are (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). There is another call for submission of proposals at EU that will include Afghanistan. Trainings on climate change and WUR partners.
- The proposed idea of Prof. Grewlich on **Afghanistan-Central Asia Water-Energy Academy** (former idea of Bishkek Water Academy). Prof. Grewlich could be invited to a conference call of the Amu Darya Basin Network.

B) Funding opportunities for the activities of the ADBN

Exploration of funding is needed for the activities of the ADBN beyond the 2011 period; in particular:

- Translation of the major parts of the website, posted publications, scientific articles of the young / local researchers;
- At the same time, the necessity in Russian and/or local languages arises in the organization of future conference calls or events, especially when the ADBN is extended to include more members from the region;
- In addition, maintenance of the ADBN's website also needs financial means.

PROJECT DOCUMENT OF THE AMU DARYA BASIN NETWORK

C) *Identification of target groups for capacity development*

Participants expressed their views on the groups that should be targeted as part of the Network's activities.

- Mixed group consisting of young / local researchers and practitioners on the ground

Firstly, engaging young / local researchers and professionals – the emerging researchers is important as they are future water leaders. To develop their capacities, it is not only important to transfer technical knowledge and skills, but also essential leadership capacities such as vision building, systems thinking, organizational management, and other skills..

At the same time, practitioners on the ground see and have insights into different parts of the basin system and can help inform policy and practice.

- Women

Inclusion of women as part of the activities of the Amu Darya Basin Network was also suggested because women in Central Asia are, generally, underrepresented and, therefore, may not have the same formal leadership roles as men. We have an opportunity in forming the ADBN membership and target groups to seek out and support **young and existing women leaders in the water management field**.

POLICY BRIEF ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

D) *Structure and suggested points to address in the Brief outline "Empowering and developing local capacities"*

- The Brief outline that was shared prior to the conference call needs to have a focused discussion as in its current format, it discusses too many issues.
- Firstly, we need to identify what key skills are needed across different levels, and what skills are needed to be promoted.
- As a starting point, universities and research organizations could be selected to be discussed. In particular, the *Eroding capacities of the existing Universities and Research organizations* could be addressed.
- In this regard, an important point to address is the *research capacities of local researchers as compared to international researchers, and how to bridge the gap*.
- Another important point: the local staffs / researchers know how to conduct research and obtain good data. However, they do not know how to analyze the data they gathered. A capacity to understand why they are conducting their studies or research is missing in the new coming researchers.
- Brain drain: In order to prevent brain drain from the respective countries in the region and from the governmental institutions, **economic incentives for the teachers and**

researchers to stay in their respective Universities or research institutes to train others could be researched.

- The Policy Brief will be updated with the suggested comments and inputs, and will be shared with the participants
- The policy brief will be enhanced together with members' inputs, and will be finalized in the next conference call.

NEXT MEETING

E) It was proposed that the subsequent meeting of the Amu Darya Basin Network take place in the third week of June (exact date and time to be confirmed).

INFORMATION POINTS

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

The website continues to remain an essential part of the Network for knowledge and information sharing. The participants were informed that the website is being updated, and the new features to the website will be introduced in the coming 2 weeks time.

G) Follow-up Meeting to the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum, 7-8 June 2011, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Mr. Marton Krasznai, who couldn't participate in the call, informed by email that there will be follow-up meeting to the 2010 SPECA Economic Forum on "Launching a Plan of Action to Strengthen Stability and Sustainable Development of Afghanistan through Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia", 7-8 June 2011, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

H) Side event as part of international conference "Towards the 6th World Water Forum — Cooperative Actions for Water Security", 12-13 May 2011, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Mr. Manville briefed the participants about the side event that was planned to be organized as part of the international conference "Towards the 6th World Water Forum — Cooperative Actions for Water Security", 12-13 May 2011, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The side event was expected to bring together Afghan and Central Asian experts. Since, the planned event will not happen; new ideas and proposals are being sought.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS AGREED:

Main activities	Sub activities	By whom	By when
Project Document:	Incorporation of comments and inputs	Secretariat	
	Approval of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision & Mission - Target groups - Themes 	Members	COB May 6
Summary Notes:	Send feedback to the summary notes	Members	COB May 6
Policy Brief:	Comments, feedback, inputs	Members	COB May 14

**FIFTH CONFERENCE CALL OF THE AMU DARYA BASIN NETWORK
WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL 2011, 12:00AM-13:30PM (CEST)**

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda;**
- 2. Review of the previous conference call's action points:**
 - a. Mapping of leading relevant training programs/institutions, networking/coordination institutions, and donors
 - b. Expansion of the Amu Darya Basin Network
 - c. Funding opportunities to sustain the activities of the ADBN
- 3. Observations on the Project Document of the Amu Darya Basin Network;**
 - a. Understanding the mandate and different roles
 - b. Target groups
 - c. Thematic areas identified for 2011
- 4. Theme 1: Capacity Development – Policy Paper**
 - a. Discuss and finalize the suggested outline
 - b. Identify and discuss agreed points for the April 20th conference call, whereby the remaining points are discussed in a following call.
 - c. Identify the number and approximate dates of conference calls discussing capacity development.
- 5. Next steps**
 - a. Upcoming conference calls
 - b. Notify participants that the EWI team will be phoning them to identify guests to be invited for the next conference calls on capacity development

**FIFTH CONFERENCE CALL OF THE AMU DARYA BASIN NETWORK
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List of participants

Joining via the telephone conference:

1. **Dr. Najam Abbas**, Senior Fellow on Central and South Asia, EastWest Institute
2. **Dr. Iskandar Abdullaev**, Regional Advisor, Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia (Programme), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
3. **Mr. Yves Manville**, Conseiller, Desk Officer - Afghanistan Pakistan Interministerial Committee in Paris, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France
4. **Mr. Dominic Stucker**, Program Officer, Research Intern, Sustainability Leaders Network, International Water Management Institute, California, USA
5. **Mr. Vincent Thomas**, Social Water Management Specialist, Landell-Mills / Ministry of Energy and Water (Afghanistan) Kabul, Afghanistan
6. **Dr. Kai Wegerich**, Researcher, Water Policy and Institutions, International Water Management Institute, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
7. **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:

8. **Mr. Brad Brasseur**, Project Assistant Regional Security, EastWest Institute
9. **Ms. Guljamal Jumamuratova**, Project Assistant, Amu Darya Basin Network
10. **H.E. Ambassador Guenter Overfeld**, Vice President and Director for Regional Security and Preventive Diplomacy, EastWest Institute
11. **Mr. Michael Zumot**, Assistant to Vice President Regional Security, EastWest Institute