

Afghan–Central Asian  
water cooperation on  
management of the Amu  
Darya river





## Colophon

This document reports on the process 'Afghan–Central Asian water cooperation on management of the Amu Darya river: connecting experts and policymakers in the low lands' which is being carried out within the framework of the Development Policy Review Network (DPRN) and organised by the EastWest Institute and Wageningen UR– Water Engineering Group. Aiming to stimulate informed debate and discussion of issues related to the formulation and implementation of (Dutch) development policies, DPRN creates opportunities to promote an open exchange and dialogue between scientists, policymakers, development practitioners and the business sector in the Netherlands. For more information see [www.DPRN.nl](http://www.DPRN.nl) and [www.global-connections.nl](http://www.global-connections.nl).

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# Report on 'Afghan–Central Asian water cooperation on management of the Amu Darya river'

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**Responsible organisations:** EastWest Institute and Wageningen University/Irrigation and Water Engineering Group

## Introduction

On 7 December 2009, an application for funding was made by the EastWest Institute and the Wageningen University/Irrigation and Water Engineering Group for a project entitled 'Afghan–Central Asian water cooperation on management of the Amu Darya river: connecting experts and policymakers in the low lands'.

The theme of the project was cross–border cooperation between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on management of the Amu Darya's water. It aimed at promoting information exchange between academia, private sector experts and Dutch and Belgian policymakers who work on Afghanistan and Central Asia, thereby enhancing awareness of a subject of critical importance to sustainable development. The project envisaged:

- Connecting experts and officials in the development and hydrological sectors;
- Collecting, summarising and communicating the current national policy priorities of key stakeholders;
- Collecting, summarising and communicating academic suggestions for improved policies;
- Organising policy review seminars;
- Publishing an outcome report.

## Background to the theme

The Amu Darya Basin provides an exceptionally valuable case to explore the potential for enhanced cross–border cooperation between Afghanistan and the downstream Central Asian States. The Amu Darya river is an essential tributary of the Aral Sea Basin. It is crucial to the livelihoods of millions of people in the basin. Development of agriculture in all the riparian states and hydroelectric power in Tajikistan and Afghanistan particularly depends heavily on the water resources of the Amu Darya. Hence, water strategies and projects (either irrigation or hydropower projects) in the upstream countries (Afghanistan and Tajikistan) are often contested by the downstream countries (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

A policy review process on this topic was deemed very timely given the ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of Afghanistan, and the commitment of the international community to foster development in Afghanistan. Increasingly, key donors to the water sector in Afghanistan are the governments of countries in the region, like Iran, China, and India, as well as remote stakeholders, including Belgium, the Netherlands and other European countries. In addition multilateral organisations like the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Commission, the Islamic Development Bank, the UN (UNECE, FAO, UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF) and international non-governmental organisations are playing an important role.

Often these projects focus on local or meso-level water infrastructure rehabilitation and development, such as dams and rehabilitating existing or new irrigation systems. A good example is the Netherlands' choice to focus on rural development, through small-scale projects to dig or restore irrigation channels, construct new canals and water reservoirs, and take measures to protect river banks. Belgium participates in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and is funding a series of multilateral projects primarily focusing on rural development (which would implicitly also incorporate water projects). However, neither Dutch nor Belgian policies indicate a regional focus in their Afghanistan development-related work.

Even though basin management is internationally promoted, in the context of Afghanistan the transboundary impact of the development projects is often overlooked or only addressed within the sub-basins contributing to the Amu Darya, but not in the Amu Darya basin itself. The policy review process we propose is geared towards concrete improvements of existing Dutch and Belgian policies and the generation of new policy options aimed at sustainable development in Afghanistan considering the implications for downstream riparian states. As the international community begins to explore new strategies for its approach to stabilising Afghanistan, the need for regional approaches will become ever stronger.

The Netherlands and Belgium are home to a large number of policymakers as well as academics and other experts specialising in Afghanistan and Central Asia geographically and in water cooperation as a theme. It is the experience of the applicants, though, that there is much room for improved connections between the institutions and individuals that often work in isolation or suboptimal coordination. The improved connections that the proposed process seeks to establish will allow for better informed policies.

## Activities realised

### **Preparation work – reaching out to build the network/establishment of website**

The process started by an outreach campaign via e-mail and telephone, thus laying the foundations of the virtual Amu Darya Basin Network, targeting in the first instance rural development and water sectors experts from the Netherlands, Belgium, Afghanistan and the Central Asian region. The scope of the outreach campaign was soon broadened to include experts and decision makers from all actual and potential stakeholders from the donor community and local actors.

One staff member fully dedicated to the project sent out a standard information e-mail to potentially interested individuals, following up via telephone, collecting contact information, profiles and research documents, thus gathering essential pieces to build up an online platform to connect experts and policymakers ([www.amudaryabasin.net](http://www.amudaryabasin.net)).

With the help of members of the Amsterdam-based DPRN team, the online platform grew into the key outreach tool to enhance membership of the Amu Darya Basin Network. It became and continues to be the online repository for research materials and all project documentation.

### **Conference calls**

Throughout the project period the Amu Darya Basin Network held regular conference calls between its members and other experts to drive a process of improving connections between them and to generate joint recommendations relating to that goal. Three such conference calls were held in the project period, combining a physical get-together in Brussels with attendance by people located outside Brussels, including individuals participating from Afghanistan and Central Asia:

- The first conference, held on 30 June 2010, focused mainly on explaining the process objectives and on introductions;
- The second conference, held on 29 July 2010, featured a very dynamic discussion of specific issues that the network should focus on;
- The third call, held on 16 September 2010, discussed the role of the network as regards the continued development of the issues proposed during the second call.

The conference calls showed a consensus that Central Asia and Afghanistan have long been on the radar of the international community. There is no shortage of donor interest in the region in general and for environmental challenges such as the sustainable use of the Amu Darya water resources. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and many other organisations are active in the region.

The enormous number of projects and initiatives and actors involved make it difficult to operate in a coordinated manner and this presents a challenge as regards efficiency and effectiveness. The above-mentioned lack of clarity or insufficient communication of goals, objectives and ongoing projects make it extremely difficult to gain an overall picture of what the donor community contributes as a whole.



### **Informal gathering of a small group of members of the Amu Darya Basin Network in Tashkent**

In addition to the organised conference calls, a number of the members of the Amu Darya Basin Network met on 9 October 2010 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The meeting, originally not scheduled, was the initiative of those network members to gather information and make more personal contacts with each other. This was an additional, budget-neutral activity.

The members discussed several issues related to capacity development in the region. In particular, they addressed challenges related to local systems of education, its quality, and incentives for students. The participants also discussed the establishment of a Regional Centre of Excellence to focus on issues of regional water security and as one potentially useful measure to inform development policies. This idea had been brought forth in preceding meetings.

In order to learn from previous experiences, the network secretariat mapped existing international, regional, national universities in the region, as well as projects, databases and virtual networks and shared this with the participants as an Appendix in a [policy brief](#).

The added value of the meeting was that the network members connected personally and found additional opportunities for potential cooperation outside the original scope of the project. In particular, two members submitted a joint application to the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship Programme.

### **Conference/debrief on the Amu Darya Basin Network**

On 7 December 2010, the EastWest Institute (EWI), the Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention, Wageningen University and the Amu Darya Basin Network jointly held a one-day consultation on Enhancing Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia through Regional Cooperation on Water to provide impetus to the development of opportunities for regional cooperation on water between Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours.

The meeting built on a series of high-level consultations that EWI convened in 2009 on 'Alternative Futures for Afghanistan and the Stability of Southwest Asia: Improving Regional Cooperation on Water', with support of the Gerda Henkel Stiftung and the Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention. Similarly, the meeting benefited from the above-mentioned experiences and preceding activities of the Amu Darya Basin Network ([www.amudaryabasin.net](http://www.amudaryabasin.net)) that the EastWest Institute and the Wageningen University Irrigation and Water Engineering Group established in 2010 with support of the Development Policy Review Network.

The consultation provided an opportunity for policymakers and experts to:

Make an in-depth assessment of the needs and opportunities for transboundary water cooperation between Afghanistan and Central Asia;

- Map and review current transboundary water cooperation;

- Identify legal aspects of regional cooperation on water between Afghanistan and Central Asia;
- Review and develop donor community perspectives on transboundary water cooperation;
- Improve exchange between international experts and policymakers on transboundary water cooperation.

The event took place at the European Parliament in Brussels and was hosted by Dutch Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Thijs Berman, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with Afghanistan (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)) and Belgian MEP Bart Staes, Vice Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to the EU–Kazakhstan, EU–Kyrgyzstan and EU–Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia (Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance).

The gathering was attended by more than 70 experts and policymakers from Afghanistan, Central Asia and many of the most important donor actors, including the Council of the European Union, the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the World Bank, the UNECE, the UN Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development, UNESCO, GTZ, and the Economic Cooperation Organisation.

On 8 December 2010, the members of the Amu Darya Basin Network, established within the framework of this project, gathered in an off-the-record debrief, to review the conference and map out the future of the network beyond the conclusion date of the project.

## Results

The following results were envisaged at the outset of the project:

- Sensitise foreign and development policymakers in the Dutch and Belgian institutional framework to the importance of cross-border cooperation on water between Afghanistan and Central Asian states

The response of policymakers from the Netherlands and Belgium taught the organisers a number of important things early on in the process:

- While the project focus clearly related to the Netherlands' and Belgium's engagement in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, be it militarily or through development aid or capacity building initiatives, promotion of river basin-wide cooperation has fallen down their agenda, due to the massive security challenges they are facing, which are of more immediate political relevance;
- This confirms the acute need for projects like this one to make policymakers more aware of the longer term challenges and, at the same time, experts of the shorter term priorities of policymakers;

- The organisers saw the need to look beyond merely engaging with policymakers in The Hague and Brussels in order to be operationally and politically relevant. It was indeed starting to look particularly challenging to get the active involvement of foreign ministry desk officers and other policymakers based in both capitals.
- Every participant in the outreach campaign conversations expressed the critical value of local ownership and input. At the same time, they impressed on the organisers that the best way to connect policymakers, researchers in Central Asia and Afghanistan is to direct collective resources to becoming practical and operational within the region.
- It is important, though, to note that at the end of the process the organisers were successful in engaging a critical mass of experts and policymakers from the Netherlands and Belgium (see the list of participants below) to a realistic extent given the current climate of policy priorities of both countries. The choice to engage with other donor actors and local stakeholder was the right one to ensure value for the project.
- A lasting connection between Dutch and Belgian policymakers and outside water experts has been established
  - The project has resulted in a solid network of policymakers and experts on the issue of water security in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As described above, the participation of Dutch and Belgian policymakers as such has been rather limited. However, a significant number of Dutch and Belgium-based experts have actively participated in the project activities, linking up with counterparts in the region of focus.
  - The organisers have been encouraged by the off-line continuation of conversations between ad hoc groupings of participants in the project. The informal gathering of a small group of members of the network in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, (not planned at the outset of the project) is testimony to that effect.
  - Overlapping interests and activities have been identified between several groups and organisations that have participated in the project. Ad hoc cooperation and information exchange has resulted from the linking process that was key to the project. It is the organisers' firm belief that the online platform ([www.amudaryabasin.net](http://www.amudaryabasin.net)) has made a significant contribution to that effect.
- New policy options have been disseminated beyond the participants in the process to influence additional stakeholders in the sustainable development of Afghanistan and its neighbourhood, particularly in the water sector

The main issues discussed in the project activities, as summarised in a [position paper](#) which is part of the process output, were the challenges encountered while fostering basin-wide cooperation between various actors. The following challenges were identified:

- A general challenge concerns the fact that policymaking and research take place in different and unaligned time frames. On the one hand, policy development and implementation processes are short-term and operational in nature, with election

terms of 3–5 years. On the other hand, the research community has a longer-term perspective, as it is driven by the need for credibility based on evidence through longer-term analysis of trends. If we want research to make sense to policymakers and policy to provide clear and consistent directions for researchers, we therefore have to synchronise the time frames;

- The network also identified a challenge between researchers and policymakers as far as a lack of coordination of their goals and objectives is concerned. This requires more transparency and dedication to communication. Researchers should make clear how their research relates to policies and other research;
- A specific challenge originating in the local reality of the Amu Darya Basin region concerns the lack of any stable and sustainable solution put forward by political leaders for the diverging interests of upstream and downstream riparian states. Even though Central Asian states, apart from Afghanistan, have embarked on a process of formal agreements in order to tackle the transboundary challenges related to the water resources of the Amu Darya since 1992, this has not yet resulted in a solution to water security problems acceptable to all stakeholders. There is still only limited communication between policymakers and scientific experts within the basin. It is important for successful cooperation in all aspects of water-sharing within the Amu Darya basin that there is political will and commitment at some of the highest levels. However, progress on such transboundary cooperation cannot be achieved overnight. Rather, it is a process of incremental benefits;
- Other specific challenges faced in the region are a lack of data, particularly in Afghanistan, and a lack of capacity (technical expertise).
- Lastly, a serious challenge is posed by the lack of coordination between donor activities. In many river basins, transboundary cooperation is initiated and financed by international donors. Although their role is limited, it can still be significant. Donors can support the conclusion of an international treaty and the resolution of underlying issues. They can also promote action on the ground, support social, economic and/or political change in the basin and provide continuing support after conclusion of an agreement.

These observations have been shared through [www.amudaryabasin.net](http://www.amudaryabasin.net) and will be distributed in hard copy to some 750 policymakers and experts across the globe, on finalisation of the project.

## Contribution to the DPRN objectives

### **Stimulating informed debate and relevance for policy and practice**

The very design of the whole project was always geared at stimulating debate. Every activity in the process was essentially a debate: conference calls, informal seminar meetings in the region of focus, and a consultation at the European Parliament.

The culmination of the process in a consultation at the European Parliament in Brussels was testimony to the stimulating potential of the project activities. Experts and policymakers were hosted by key Members of the European Parliament, who underscored the need to be informed by scientific experts in formulating their policy priorities and setting the agenda.

However, it is fair to say that no new scientific ideas (*sensu stricto*) have come out of the project activities. That said, the purpose to connect scientists and experts and engage them in information and ideas exchange was clearly achieved.

For many of the experts engaged in the process, their participation in the concluding consultation of the process was a rare occasion to liaise with key decision makers and administrators of donor actors alike.

### **Involvement of relevant partners**

For a detailed overview and quantification of individual participation in the project activities, see Appendix 2.

A number of crucial actors **based in the Netherlands** were represented, including:

- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Relevance:** Since 2001, the Netherlands has been helping Afghanistan to build a stable and secure society through reconstruction and development programmes, working with the Afghan government and international partners. Dutch development experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and military experts are working in Afghanistan.

- UNESCO–IHE Institute for Water Education

**Relevance:** Since 1996, the Institute's staff has been involved in various donor-funded, projects under the Aral Sea Programme in Central Asia. These included the Aral Sea Wetlands Restoration Project, the Sudoche Wetlands Restoration Project, the Aral Sea Basin Management Model Project and a special research programme for 'Integrated Water Resources Management under Conditions of Scarcity' with funding from the NATO Science for Peace programme. Currently, UNESCO–IHE is working jointly with the Training Centre within the Scientific Information Centre / Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia on a project to develop Training-of-Trainers programmes, lecturing materials and business plans for future continuation of activities.

- Wageningen University and Research Centre

**Relevance:** Wageningen University has been affiliated with a number of projects in Central Asia and Afghanistan over a period of 10 years. Among these, the EU project on Jayhun, which combined aspects of water availability due to climate and global change, revised dam operations in the Amu Darya basin and improved irrigation strategies. Within this project, the first automatic water quality monitoring station was established in the Amu Darya. Other activities are associated to the coordination of the INTAS projects on 'Development of integrated water management strategies for the Tuyamuyn reservoir complex' and 'Pollution avoidance and clean up strategies for the lower Amu Darya'. Current projects focus in

particular on supporting the ECO-GIS centre in Tashkent, the collaborative education and training of young scientists, the revision of water management practices in irrigation areas, and the assessment of the impact of climate change on the Amu Darya basin.

Wageningen University and Research Centre is also contributing to setting up an agricultural education programme in Afghanistan and a national agricultural education centre in Kabul. Teachers are trained for regional education centres

A number of crucial actors **based in Belgium** were represented, including:

- Institute of European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

**Relevance:** The Institute's current research projects include transatlantic cooperation in post-conflict reconstruction, the EU's contribution to security sector reform in Afghanistan, the ongoing development of European crisis management policies, and EU conflict prevention and crisis management policies, particularly towards the Western Balkans and Afghanistan.

- Global Water Institute

**Relevance:** The Global water Institute is an international nongovernmental organisation providing water-related services for the environment security, societal stabilisation and demobilised reintegration. The organisation assists post-conflict countries in the environmental security and societal stability by training and working with demobilised citizens in the field of water.

A number of crucial actors relevant to the process from a non-Dutch, non-Belgian perspective were represented, including:

- Asian Development Bank

**Relevance:** The ADB recognises that Amu Darya river basin, among others in Asia, needs to be managed in integrated ways that promote equitable sharing of water resources while preserving the environment. It promotes investments in the infrastructure and management of water regulation and hydropower facilities, flood management, and watershed and wetlands conservation.

- Aga Khan Development Network

**Relevance:** In Afghanistan, programmes of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) include large-scale rural development, health, education, civil society programmes, microfinance and other services. In Central Asia, AKDN has initiated an establishment of the University of Central Asia that provides training to adults and young people in the critical skills needed in the new Central Asia economies, including accounting, business English and mountain guide training.

- The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

**Relevance:** GTZ has been actively supporting the Central Asian states in their joint activities towards sustainable regional water management, advising the regional, national and local

institutions involved on the formulation of legal provisions, developing guidelines for water management and water monitoring. In addition, GTZ is training the personnel of these institutions on irrigation, dam security, adapting to climate change and water use and reuse. In Afghanistan, GTZ's work is focused on economic development, energy supply, water, education, and good governance, focusing on the rule of law, gender and regional development.

- Economic Cooperation Organisation

**Relevance:** The Economic Cooperation Organisation promotes regional integration by fostering cooperation among its member states, including Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, across a wide spectrum of fields in particular trade, transport, energy, agriculture, industry, environment, drugs trafficking, tourism etc.

- European Union (the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU)

**Relevance:** The EU has been actively cooperating with Afghanistan and the Central Asian states in the areas of economy, politics, law, agriculture, energy, transport, education, know how, drug control, the reconstruction of Afghanistan, regional security and stability. In 2004, the EU initiated the regional dialogue mechanism EU–Central Asia, contributing to strengthening of democracy, rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Central Asia and enhancing the EU's effectiveness in the region. In addition, the EU has supported water resources management through TACIS WARMAP since 1995, focusing on interstate water agreements and the development of regional water and land information system.

- KfW Bank of Development

**Relevance:** The KfW finances investments and accommodates advice services in developing countries, including Afghanistan. It works by order of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

- United Nations Development Programme

**Relevance:** UNDP, present in all Amu Darya countries, supports the governments in achieving a number of development targets in the field of security and the rule of law, transparency and accountability, local governance, human rights, environment and rural energy, as well as rural development and private sector development. It has supported the Aral Sea Basin Capacity Development Project, an Integrated Water Resources Management programme. Through community–development projects, UNDP supports activities in the Ferghana Valley to rehabilitate water supply systems, and to negotiate water sharing and water use arrangements.

- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

**Relevance:** With several projects already up and running, the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia – jointly supported by UNECE and UNESCAP – is a three-year cross-sector programme on strengthening regional institutions and modernising legal

frameworks for water resources management in Central Asia. It provides a suitable framework for the implementation of human and institutional capacity-building activities in key areas of regional cooperation that could contribute to sustained stability in Afghanistan and to the development of Central Asia at large.

- UNEP Regional Office for Europe

**Relevance:** The main activities of UNEP/ROE include supporting policy dialogue to mitigate security risks, assessing environmental security threats, promoting sustainable consumption, protecting biodiversity, and promoting enforcement and compliance with environmental law and MEAs. UNEP and other organisations work together in the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) initiative.

- World Bank

**Relevance:** The World Bank has assisted Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries to rehabilitate irrigation facilities and promote water users' associations. At a regional level, the Bank has taken a lead role in rehabilitating the Aral Sea basin since 1992. In 1998, together with the GEF, it approved the Water and Environment Management Project with the purpose of improving regional water management and addressing environmental degradation in the Aral Sea Basin. With its increased attention to regional issues, the World Bank also has prepared a regional framework paper to guide its regional support. Tentative focus areas and programmes include trade and transit, water and energy nexus, communicable diseases, knowledge sharing, civil society, and microfinance.

### **Enhancing cooperation and synergy**

The Afghan-Central Asia water cooperation process made a significant contribution to enhancing cooperation and synergy between different sectors. The examples below show how this process was important and helped enhance cooperation and synergy between policymakers and experts, and between experts from different disciplines.

- The members of the established Amu Darya Basin Network come from different disciplines and expertise, including energy, water, agriculture, international politics, law, education, and social and rural development. This gives the network added value. It is worth noting that one of the ADBN members is currently going to conduct research in the Amu Darya basin through cooperation with other members of the network.
- The consultation on 7 December 2010 included not only official statements and speeches, but also presentations from researchers and experts about the water flow in the Amu Darya river, water intake, future scenarios, and the effectiveness or failure of ongoing field projects – thus providing key decision makers with comprehensive and efficient access to relevant data.
- An expert from an interested donor country's foreign ministry consulted the Amu Darya Basin Network members on the important and crucial issues to be addressed at the next World Water Forum event in 2012 in Marseille.



## Reactions and evaluation

A total of some 75 people participated in the series of project activities. The most noteworthy reactions during and after the activities are listed below:

### **Aspects appreciated by the participants ('tops'):**

- The process offered a high quality networking with effective donors, decision makers, and a respectable line up of experts through its Amu Darya Basin Network and the events organised within the process;
- The scale of participation and expansive cross-continent lobbying attracted attention and heightened interest in the issue of regional cooperation in the Amu Darya basin;
- Bringing together experts from Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and their engagement through the network is an important step towards regional cooperation at a technical and expert level;
- The pro-active intellectual drive of the Amu Darya Basin Network members, their enthusiasm and eagerness to contribute offers options for future actions.

### **Suggestions for improvement ('tips'):**

- The process period should be extended to two years minimum, to reduce the administrative burden and enhance the chances of a lasting impact;
- The goal to connect Dutch and Belgian policymakers should be broadened in terms of geographical and thematic scope;
- Setting clear benchmarks could improve the achievement of practical actions and leverage. In this case, a group such as the Amu Darya Basin Network can be engaged in preparation of some of the sessions of larger and smaller events within a process;
- Low leverage at local level in the region, in Afghanistan particularly, could be improved by improving capacity (both human and information).

## Reflection

### Successes and contributing factors

- Several successes have been identified during the process. One major success is heightened awareness of the importance of regional cooperation in the Amu Darya basin, that has been achieved through attention to the issue in the media and at the European, donor, expert, public and other levels.
- The connection between policymakers and experts established through this process is another success. As has been mentioned, the scope of the first targeted Dutch/Belgian policymakers and experts has been broadened to include experts and decision makers from all actual and potential actors in the donor community.

- The success of this process also lies in the fact that the members of the network and the organisers of the process are equally interested in continuing to collaborate beyond the end of the process, integrating new concepts and ideas identified during the process into its work.

These successes have been achieved via a number of factors such as outreach, telephone calls and e-mail correspondence that have been carried out throughout the process. In addition, the Amu Darya Basin Network website, which includes members and their contact details, relevant policy and research publications, and the events organised during the process, played an important role. Last but not least, the consultation at the European Parliament made a major contribution to the success of the process.

Challenges and factors contributing to these challenges:

- Most countries sharing the Amu Darya basin have centralised governments, which limits engagement and cooperation at expert and technical levels, one of the most crucial and effective ways of cooperation;
- The economic inequity and conflicting interests of the riparian countries about water sharing results in cosmetic participation instead of serious meaningful ownership;
- Authorities are unwilling to broaden their scope of cooperation;

The main lessons learned as regards intersectoral cooperation and creating synergy

- Cooperation is most effective when there is equal participation between all relevant stakeholders;
- The donor countries' interests vary according to a sector or to a country. The Dutch are very experienced in water management, but are not necessarily interested in the operational aspects of regional water cooperation;
- Capacity development is one effective way to support dialogue and promote cooperation in the long term. However, policymakers are mostly interested in quick and short-term solutions;
- It is ambitious and wishful to expect that water cooperation alone can serve as a tool for expansion of regional collaboration, improve security and contribute to regional development.

## Plan for follow up

In light of the conclusion of the DPRN funding mechanism, the organisers of the project have continuously put on the agenda the continuation of the project beyond the conclusion date of the first project cycle.

It is clear that the products, ideas and policy recommendations that have come out of the project activities have found fertile breeding ground in the Amu Darya Basin Network and its online presence. Efforts towards a follow-up plan by the organisers have therefore focused

on the continuation of **the online space** [www.amudarybasin.net](http://www.amudarybasin.net) beyond January 2010. The following options were identified:

- Adoption of the website by one of the organising organisations;
- Adoption of the website by a third organisation;
- Incorporation of the website by an existing similar network, thus complementing each other.

The purpose of the **policy recommendations** was to have impact on decision making. By widely distributing the recommendations to some 750 policymakers and experts, the organisers envisage significant visibility of the output and results of the process. Beyond the distribution of the policy recommendations and outcome reports, it is however not within the authority of the organisers to generate or adapt policies according to recommendations made in the process.

Bearing in mind the high value of linking experts and policymakers through the project activities, the participants' **contact information** will be made available to all participants.

The EastWest Institute is exploring the possibility of **continued project activity** building on an idea that came out of the process activities: a project on capacity development at river basin level, engaging key local actors, regional organisations and donor agencies. At this stage, no concrete project activities can be proposed.

## Appendix 1– Programmes

### Agenda of the Opening Conference Call of the Amu Darya Basin Network Wednesday 30 June 2010

- Adoption of the agenda;
- Introduction to the project by representative of the EastWest Institute;
  - Previous activities
  - Goals
  - Planned activities
- Round of introductions of participants;
  - Expertise
  - Current area of focus
- Current state of affairs of bridging scientific research and policy community;
  - Good examples of cooperation between researchers and policymakers
  - Major challenges
    - Lack of transparency of policies and strategies
    - Difficult access to policymakers
    - Lack of political will
    - Lack of regional perspective – linking local challenges to basin level challenges
    - Lack of capacity
    - Access to research documents and expert contacts
    - Engagement of key stakeholder Afghanistan
    - Lack of policy coordination from donors
- Priorities for the Amu Darya Basin Network;
- Next steps;
  - Further build-up of the website
  - Upcoming conference calls (29 July, 26 August, 7 October) and seminar (November, date tbc)
  - Outcome report

## Agenda of the Second Conference Call of the Amu Darya Basin Network Thursday 29 July 2010

- Introduction of participants;
- Short overview of the first conference call and summary notes;
  - Policy making and scientific research take place in different time frames;
  - Lack of transparency / difficulty to understand each other's work and priorities;
  - Slowly growing culture of cooperation in the region;
  - An information deficit in the region;
  - Lack of capacity (technical and negotiation skills, human resources,...) in the region;
  - Failure to put a basin-wide approach, including Afghanistan, into practice;
  - Lack of coordination between multitude of actors of the donor community.
- Discussion questions
  - Can the Network drive forward an idea towards efficient and effective sharing of policy relevant data (and analysis thereof) across the whole basin;
  - Can the Network drive forward an idea to coordinate collection of policies and projects of each stakeholder, including donors that fund Amu Darya basin project
  - Can the Network contribute to the following identified needs:
    - I. Multilingual and interdisciplinary training of aspiring professionals in all matters relating to basin-wide management of the Amu Darya's water resources;
    - II. Translation of reports and other documents from and into Russian and English;
    - III. Summary of research reports;
    - IV. Database of scientific projects and academic articles (cfr. CAWater-Info);
    - V. Info on grants etc.
  - What could a permanent advisory body to policymakers look like, through research support and guidance for policy coordination in the areas relevant to land use, hydrology, integrated water management, international water law, and rural development?
- Next steps
  - Further build-up of the website
    - I. Improving the usability of the website

- II. Adding more resources
- Upcoming conference calls
  - I. 26 August 2010
  - II. 7 October 2010
- Seminar in November, date and venue to be confirmed
- Outcome report

## Agenda of the Third Conference Call of the Amu Darya Basin Network Thursday 16 September 2010

- Brief introduction of participants;
- Overview of the second conference call and summary notes;
- Presentation of the idea of a 'Regional Centre of Excellence on Water'
  - Vision
  - Goals
  - Target audience
  - Key areas of focus
  - Potential partners
  - Key challenges towards establishing
    - I. How to obtain support from national governments
    - II. Obtain recognition for its education
    - III. Previous negative experiences
    - IV. Funding
  - Process of establishment
  - Potential role of the Network in driving this idea forward
- Next steps
  - Upcoming seminar of the Amu Darya Basin Network
  - Further build-up of the website
    - I. Improving the usability of the website
    - II. Adding more resources
  - Outcome report

## Agenda of the informal gathering of a small group of members of the Amu Darya Basin Network in Tashkent Saturday 9 October 2010

- Opening and introduction by Dr Kai Wegerich
- Short overview of the third conference call and review of the rolling summary notes
- Discussion of the proposed Regional Centre of Excellence
  - Which role do we see for the Network in driving this idea forward?
  - Discussion of the updated mapping exercise, prepared by the ADBN Secretariat
  - Discussion of challenges, opportunities and risks, based on the proposal
- Brussels Seminar of the ADBN + others
  - Update on the planning process
  - The concept note
  - The agenda
  - Q & A
- Next steps and sustainability of the ADBN process
  - Next call towards the end of October, date to be confirmed
  - Options for adoption of the website



## Agenda of the Consultation on Enhancing Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia through Regional Cooperation on Water, Tuesday 7 December 2010

08h30 - 09h00	Registration at the ASP Place Luxemburg entrance of the European Parliament
09h00 - 09h15	Welcoming Remarks
	<p><b>Chair: Ambassador Guenter L. Overfeld</b>, Vice President and Director of the Regional Security Programme and Preventive Diplomacy Initiatives of the EastWest Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welcoming remarks by Mr John E. Mroz</b>, Founder, President and CEO, EastWest Institute</li> <li>• <b>MEP Bart Staes</b>, Vice Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to the EU–Kazakhstan, EU–Kyrgyzstan and EU–Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia (Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance)</li> <li>• <b>Ms Kim de Vries</b>, Programme Assistant, Development Policy Review Network / University of Amsterdam / AISSR</li> </ul>
09h15 - 10h45	<p>'Review and Mapping of Existing Transboundary Water Cooperation between Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries'</p> <p>Panel + Plenary Debate</p>
	<p><b>Chair: Ambassador Guenter L. Overfeld</b>, Vice President and Director of the Regional Security Program and Preventive Diplomacy Initiative of the EastWest Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. Dr Mohammad Naim Eqrar</b>, Dean of the Faculty of Geo–Sciences of the University of Kabul</li> <li>• <b>Prof. Viktor A. Dukhovny</b>, Director, Scientific Information Centre of Interstate Coordination Water Commission</li> <li>• <b>Mr Marton Krasznai</b>, Regional Advisor for Economic Cooperation and Integration, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe: 'The UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). Strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia as a contribution to stability and development of Afghanistan'</li> <li>• <b>Ms Dinara Ziganshina</b>, IHP–HELP Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (under the auspices of UNESCO), University of Dundee</li> </ul> <p>Plenary Debate</p>
10h45 - 11h00	Networking Coffee Break
11h00 - 12h30	

	<p>Working Groups:</p> <p>‘Needs, Challenges and Opportunities for Transboundary Water Cooperation between Afghanistan and Central Asia’</p>		
	<p><b>working Group 1</b> Energy Cooperation (Room P3C 050)</p>	<p><b>Working group 2</b> Agricultural Development (Room P3C 050)</p>	<p><b>WORKING GROUP 3</b> Capacity Building (Room 04 M 068)</p>
	<p>Chaired by Mr Jakob Granit (Project Director, Stockholm International Water Institute)</p>	<p>Chaired by Dr Iskandar Abdullaev (GTZ – German Technical Cooperation)</p>	<p>Chaired by Dr Reza Ardakanian (Director, UN–Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development)</p>
	<p>Development plans</p> <p>Political challenges</p> <p>Technical challenges</p> <p>What is needed to overcome the challenges?</p>	<p>Development plans</p> <p>Political challenges</p> <p>Technical challenges</p> <p>What is needed to overcome the challenges?</p>	<p>Institutional capacity</p> <p>Technical and financial capacity</p> <p>Connecting policymakers with experts</p>
12 h 30 - 14 h 15	Seated lunch in the European Parliament visitors restaurant		
14 h 15 - 14 h 45	Plenary Session - Report Back from Working Groups		
14 h 45 - 16 h 15	‘Donor Perspectives’ Panel + Plenary Debate		

	<p><b>Chair: Mr Marton Krasznai</b>, Regional Advisor for Economic Cooperation and Integration, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr M. Yahya Maroofi</b>, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organisation</li> <li>• <b>Mr Philippe Meunier</b>, Deputy Director General for Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs</li> <li>• <b>Mr Guy Alaerts</b>, Program Team Leader for the Water Sector at the World Bank World Bank</li> <li>• <b>Dr Jenniver Sehring</b>, Political Advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia</li> </ul> <p>Council of the European Union</p> <p><b>Plenary Debate</b></p>
1 6 h 1 5 - 1 6 h 3 0	<b>Networking Coffee Break</b>
1 6 h 3 0 - 1 7 h 3 0	<b>Concluding Session and Recommendations</b>
	<p><b>Chair: Ambassador Guenter L. Overfeld</b>, Vice President and Director of the Regional Security Program and Preventive Diplomacy Initiative of the EastWest Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MEP Thijs BERMAN</b>, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with Afghanistan (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&amp;D))</li> </ul> <p>Plenary Debate</p>
1 7 h 3 0 - 1 8 h 3 0	<b>Cocktail reception</b>

## Agenda of the Fourth Meeting of the Amu Darya Call of the Amu Darya Basin Network, Wednesday 8 December 2010

09h30 – 12h30	Meeting of the members of the Amu Darya Basin Network
	<p>Chaired by</p> <p><b>Dr Kai Wegerich</b> (International Water Management Institute)</p> <p>and</p> <p><b>Mrs Ewa Wietsma-Lącka</b> (Environmental Sciences Group, Wageningen University)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome by Dr Kai Wegerich and Mrs Ewa Wietsma</li> <li>• Brief on the ‘Consultation on Enhancing Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia through Regional Cooperation on Water’</li> <li>• How can the Amu Darya Basin Network contribute to capacity development in the region?</li> <li>• Which focus should the Amu Darya Basin Network adopt?</li> <li>• How can the Amu Darya Basin Network advocate for new policy ideas, such as a previously debated Regional Centre of Excellence?</li> <li>• How can the Amu Darya Basin Network help raise funds for implementation of new policy ideas?</li> <li>• The future of the network: steering, managing, convening, partnering, maintaining the website</li> <li>• Evaluation of the first project cycle of the Amu Darya Basin Network</li> <li>• Envisaged outcomes to be reported on</li> </ul>
12h30 – 14h00	Buffet luncheon and goodbye drinks
14h00 – ...	Participant departures

## Appendix 2 – List of participants

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### Appendix 3 – Overview of process output

- **Position paper:** this document is the summary of the conference calls and the meetings of the Amu Darya Basin Network members. The paper contains an overview of identified challenges in the Amu Darya river basin and concrete recommendations for regional and international experts and decision-makers. This document is available at [www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/position-paper.pdf](http://www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/position-paper.pdf).
- **Policy Brief ‘Capacity development for regional cooperation in the Amu Darya River Basin’:** this document can be downloaded from the process website: [www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/policy-brief.pdf](http://www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/policy-brief.pdf)
- **DPRN Process Report ‘Afghan–Central Asian water cooperation on management of the Amu Darya river’:** available at [www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/process-report.pdf](http://www.amudaryabasin.net/publications/process-report.pdf)
- **Report of the 7 December 2010 conference:** this document cannot be published within the project period, as feedback and input will be collected from key participants in the course of January and February 2011; it will be available in due time at the process website.
- **Website of the Amu Darya Basin Network ([www.amudaryabasin.net](http://www.amudaryabasin.net)):** the website has served and continues to serve as the key online platform for members of the Amu Darya Basin Network and other experts and policymakers interested in networking opportunities as well as an online repository for up-to-date research and policy documentation relating to issues of water security in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

## Appendix 4 – Background literature and policy documents

### Policy Documents

#### International

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