

24 September, 2014

**Asia-Pacific Region (sub-region Central Asia and Caucasus)**  
- Draft Position Paper for sub-regional side-event at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum -

**Competence Creation for Cooperative Leadership  
Towards Water Security in the Aral Sea Basin**

**I. Rationale**

The sharing of water resources between competing demands for human consumption, irrigation, industrial use, the generation of electricity, and sustainability of ecosystems in water-scarce region such as the Aral Sea Basin - one of the world-wide common, and most complex challenge for actual and future water security. The actual situation within the Aral Sea Basin is complicated to move to better progress because of:

- Population growth, especially in urban areas;
- Not adequate ecosystem approach and slow IWRM application;
- Ageing and degradation of water infrastructure;
- Lack of mutual trust;
- Absence of agreed mechanisms for funding by the states to cover adequate operational expenses of regional institutions related to water;
- Failure of the donor community to fully engage EC IFAS in preparation and implementation of projects.

In this regard, the EC IFAS – as the only policy making regional institution supported by the highest political level - reiterates the commitments to provide cooperative leadership and support to mutual efforts of five countries through the mobilization of resources from all sources, capacity-building and technology transfer towards real water security.

The Chang Mai Declaration which was released as the summary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Pacific Water Summit which was held on 19-20 May, 2013 in Chiang Mai, Thailand to discuss ‘Water Security and Leadership’, emphasized to *accelerate the process of incorporating integrated water resources planning and management, as appropriate, in the framework of the socio-economic development planning process while supporting the best practices and traditional treatment of water resources, and enhance regional and international cooperation on sharing, exchange and dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge, as well as best practices, related to integrated water resources*

*management*'.

The Central Asian sub-region is comparatively wealthy in water resources. However, the above-mentioned challenges and need for stable economic growth in the region of the past two decades has brought to the forefront the issue of 'Not enough water' for proper sustainability of water ecosystems. In addition, there are issues of transboundary rivers over the region. The way forward to mitigate and resolve these complex situations is through proper competence creation for adequate cooperative leadership and governance for water eco-systems survival. At the same time there are a number of cross-cutting water related issues such as water and food, water and energy, water and climate change and the necessity of increasing 'Water Security' for sustainable growth.

Competence of governance is a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable the regional countries to cooperate effectively around water resources.

EC IFAS in cooperation with GWP CACENA, which is recognized as an international network regardless that it is represented by local partner institutions, is going to invite other active in the region national, regional and international agencies and institutions to contribute to the cooperative competence creation. The main instrument for this is Water Diplomacy and mobilization of commitment for the Aral Sea basin problems.

The potential of water diplomacy to help safeguard water security at multiple levels through identification and strengthening of shared benefits has been widely acknowledged. Water diplomacy was traditionally related only to relations between sovereign States on transboundary waters, but nowadays is transforming and expanding to a broader process that deals with diverse water challenges and involves diverse stakeholder groups by means of information, interaction and negotiation.

## **II. Proposal of activities in Central Asian sub-region**

The cooperative competence creation and mobilization of commitment for the Aral Sea basin problems is suggesting by three phases:

### **1. Preparatory Phase:**

During this phase it is proposed to set up regional working group (including EC IFAS, SIC ICWC, SIC CSD, CAREC, CDC "Energy", GWP CACENA). With involvement of international consultants to design a regional water dialogue and modeling framework that can be accepted by all key actors as effective, inclusive and transparent.

As a second step to organize kick-off workshop to get better understanding of water diplomacy in practice considering its power for competence creation. It would be achieved by combination of modeling and tools for systems analysis and policy analysis and, the use of international water law, negotiation process management, and mediation of solutions for challenging issues of the Aral Sea basin.

**Box.1.** On a parallel track there will be implemented another initiative of EC IFAS with support from the World Bank and GWP CACENA “Strengthening model capacity for IWRM training program” as an integral part of competence creation. This initiative addressing to understand the of diverse modeling approaches. It will be done through an introduction to model scope, purpose, principles, assumptions, capabilities and limitations and outline of the administrative aspects – access, use, costs, training needs. Illustrate model integration capacity, and “plug and play” capabilities. Through experts’ queries, develop hypothetical scenarios and practice running models.

On the basis of this parallel track there will be organized work within group to develop scenarios using the above-mentioned models and present the results for further discussion and consultations.

## **2. Consultations phase and preparations for their finalization at the 7<sup>th</sup> WWF in Korea.**

At this stage it is suggested to organize a discussions on the proposed national development scenarios and strategy options, capitalizing on synergies identified, addressing trade-offs and reconciling different use options. By regional working group there will be produced assessment of national scenarios in terms of meeting regional needs and boundary conditions. As a result there will be submitted draft report “On the way to the water-ecological security in the Aral Sea Basin”. Some special focus will be given to solutions addressed to issues of the ecosystems at dried Aral Sea bed, degradation of water quality along main rivers, soil salinization, and other key aspects under umbrella of the Aral Sea Basin Program, adopted by five Presidents of central Asian countries in 2009.

The first scene, where this draft report will be publically presented, will be the sub-regional side-event at the 7<sup>th</sup> WWF in Korea in April 2015. The report will be published with different options assessed against assumed socio-economic and hydrological benchmarks. During this side event it is expected a broader discussion on the findings with all relevant stakeholders at all levels, including water users, planners, policy makers, and water professionals from and outside the Central Asia.

In the result of those two phases, EC IFAS with its partners will present at the side event in Korea the following outputs:

- Increased number of professionals in the Central Asian region who get better competence and a more clear understanding of water diplomacy in practice and who have become familiar with its tools and techniques in practice;
- Contribute to strengthening of the negotiation arena for all Central Asian countries by providing an opportunity for joint learning, better understanding of alternatives and strengthened negotiation and consensus building skills of key stakeholders;
- Establishing a foundation for further networking, communication and informed dialogue among key stakeholders on all levels in the Aral Sea basin.
- Establishing a framework for consensus building on water related issues.

### **3. Phase to conduct the post 7<sup>th</sup> WWF road-map (2015-2018) addressing to real competence creation.**

For this phase it should be agreed a prospective road-map to promote the regional water dialogue for building consensus on water resources development and management in Central Asia through providing a competence platform for various actors to come together, understand each others interests and priorities and search for mutually acceptable development options using available information and learning capacity (data, monitoring and modeling tools, scientific research, etc.). Joint identification of opportunities between different stakeholder groups is instrumental for being able to capitalize on synergies and shared benefits, to address trade-offs and to reconcile different user options.

The prospective road-map of competence creation should include 5 key implementation strategies:

- *Demonstration* – using demonstration and testing of how to make cooperation operational in a basin as a basis for confidence and trust building, shared learning and joint action on concrete steps towards building national and transboundary water governance capacity.
- *Learning* – using training and capacity building for multiple stakeholder groups.
- *Dialogue for consensus building* – initiate actions and learning events to demonstrate and catalyze new dialogues on technical, development, and political issues.
- *Leadership* – supporting empowerment of champions for transboundary water cooperation and improved water governance who can effectively advocate mobilization of water diplomacy capacity.
- *Advice and support* – providing advice and technical assistance to governments and stakeholders on demand and including development and use of institutional and legal frameworks.

### **III. Schedule**

5 June, 2014. The Asia-Pacific Regional Kick-off Meeting for the 7th World Water Forum in Singapore.

8-9 July, Dushanbe, Tajikistan – preparatory sub-regional conference of the CACENA.

August-October 2014. Preparatory phase – set up working groups and Central Asian sub-regional kick-off meeting.

November-December 2014 – January-February 2015. Consultation phase – two rounds of discussion meetings.

December 2014. Interim Report is submitted to the 7<sup>th</sup> WWF Org. Committee and APWF.

12-17 April 2015. Central Asian side-event at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

May 2015. Final Report finalized and submitted.

Throughout 2015 (tbc). Report and follow-up road-map for competence creation introduced at the IFAS Board.

Annually 2016-2018. Disseminated through EC IFAS and GWP CACENA activities and follow-up by cooperation organizations.

### **IV. Key partners:**

Executive Committee of Interstate Fund for saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS) and Global Water Partnership in Central Asia and Caucasus (GWP CACENA) – sub-regional co-ordinators. Partners: Scientific Information Centre of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC), CAREC, UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, the UN Regional Centre of Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, UNECE, GIZ, SDC, World Bank - Central Asia Energy Water Development Program (CAEWDP), EU-CA Enhanced Regional Cooperation on Environment and Water (WELOOP) and others.