Annotated Agenda

of the

First meeting of the Coordination Group on a Regional Space for Water and Environmental Information

Almaty, 1-2 September 2015

Tuesday, 1 September

10.00 First session: **Setting the scene**

Co-chairs: Sh. Talipov (EC IFAS) and Bo Libert (UNECE)

The objective of the Group is to provide guidance for and coordinate the work on a regional space for water and environmental information in Central Asia. The regional space is to provide open, comprehensive and easy to interpret information in a transparent manner and in agreed format to be used by the Governments of Central Asian countries and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its organizations and institutions as a decision support tool (information for policy implementation and assessment). The information space should also serve public participation: the academic community, education institutions and the civil society should have free access to information with the possible exception of data that has been declared confidential in accordance with agreed rules.

Opening statement by the Representative of the UNECE – Improving decision support, transparency and dialogue through a regional information space

EC IFAS: Better decision support in IFAS through improved information management

GIZ – The role of information management in strengthening regional cooperation

The World Bank – Central Asia Water Resources Management Project (CA-WARM) – Improving the information, institutional and infrastructure foundation for water resources planning and management in the Central Asia region

UNECE: Progress in the production and sharing of core environmental indicators

11.15 Coffee break

11.30 Second session: **Achievements and problems in data production, analysis and information exchange**

Co-chairs: Muhamet Durikov (SIC ICSD) and Svetlana Shivareva (Hydromet)

The Group is expected to review the present practice of the management of water and environmental information in Central Asia, point out successes and identify shortcomings including ways to overcome these.

SIC ICWC

SIC ICSD / Kazakhstan Branch of SIC ICSD

Regional Centre of Hydrometeorology

BVO Amudarya

BVO Syrdarya

13.00 Lunch break

15.00 Third session: **Principles, common criteria and structure of the information space**

Co-chairs: Vadim Sokolov (SIC ICWC) and Alexandr Nikolayenko (GIZ)

The Coordination Group is expected to discuss how to ensure that information on the regional space meets common criteria like accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, relevance, completeness, comparability and coherence over time.

ICWC Secretariat

ICSD Secretariat

EC IFAS

Coordination and Dispatch Centre "Energo"

Regional Mountain Centre of Central Asia

Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre

16.15 Coffee break

16.30 Fourth session: **Better decision support based on reliable, agreed upon information**

Co-chairs: Natalia Alexeeva (UNEP) and Manon Cassara (World Bank)

The Group is expected to discuss how effectively IFAS organizations and institutions use information as a decision support tool, including preparation of work plans, agendas, assessment of implementation of decision, project preparation, management and evaluation, donor coordination and participation in international events. The Group should develop recommendations on how to use the regional information space for improving the effectiveness of decision support within governments and IFAS organizations and institutions.

18.00 End of the meeting

Wednesday, 2 September

10.00 Fifth session: **Scope of information**

Co-chairs: Malika Babadzanova (ICWC Secretariat) and Batyr Hajiyev (UNECE)

The Group should define the scope of data / information posted on the portals that would constitute the regional information space. This might include among others information on water resources, information on the state of the environment, implementation of environmental laws, agreements and recommendations, information on social and economic aspects of environmental protection, meetings and decisions of IFAS organizations and institutions, project database, international events.
11.15 Coffee break

11.30 Sixth session: **Geographical coverage and sources of information**

Co-chairs: Djalil Buzrukov (SIC ICSD Tajikistan) and Bakyt Makhmutov (SDC)

The Group should develop recommendations on the geographical coverage and structuring of information (e.g. Aral Sea basin, Syr Darya basin, Amu Darya basin, smaller river basins, etc.) including the possibility of progressive inclusion of Afghanistan and other neighbours. The optimal combination of sources of information to be posted on the regional portal should also be discussed, including information provided by IFAS member States, information (analysis) provided by IFAS organizations and institutions as well as openly available information, including information provided by international partners.

13.00 Lunch break

15.00 Seventh session: **Legal basis and financing**

Co-chairs: Saghit Ibatullin (Implementation Committee of the Water Convention)
Denis Sorokhin (SIC ICWC)

The Groups should review the necessity to strengthen / complement the existing legal basis to develop a regional information space. Ideally the legal basis should include harmonised, agreed monitoring requirements (including comparability) and regulations on data sharing and management. The monitoring criteria should allow member states and organizations to develop and agree on unified methods to be used at all levels.

The Group should also elaborate recommendations on financing of the regional space. Financing could include donor support for an initial period but the long-term objective should be financing through an IFAS operational budget or a dedicated budget replenished by assessed contributions of States.

16.15 Coffee break

16.30 Eight session: **Transparency, access by academia, universities and the civil society**

Co-chairs: Alexey Kobzev (CAREC) and Marton Krasznai (UNECE)

The Group should elaborate recommendations on ensuring full transparency of information, including the provision of relevant, easy to interpret information for the public, the academic

and research community and the media. The information space should facilitate public participation in environmental decision making, among others by explaining the science behind decisions, regulations and other policy instruments.

17.45 Conclusions by the Chair

18.00 End of the meeting