



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



REPORT

on the activities of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea
for 2020-2023

the period of chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan

Dushanbe – 2023

PRESIDENT OF IFAS



“ *Tajikistan being the home of 60% of water resources in Central Asia during its presidency in the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea will increase its efforts to further strengthen water cooperation in Central Asia.*

**H.E. Emomali Rahmon,
President of the Republic of Tajikistan,
President of IFAS
22.03.2023**



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INTRODUCTION

The drying up of the Aral Sea is one of the world's most serious ecological disasters. Once the fourth largest lake in the world, it has now shrunk in more than 90 percent of its original size due to decades of over-irrigation and water diversion. The drying up of the Aral Sea has had a devastating impact on the environment and the livelihoods of millions of people in Central Asia.

The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was established in 1993 to solve the ecological and socio-economic problems of the Aral Sea basin. IFAS is an intergovernmental organization consisting of five founding states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The main purpose of IFAS at the moment of its establishment was financing and crediting of joint interstate ecological and scientific-practical programs and projects aimed at saving the Aral Sea and improving the ecological situation in the areas affected by the Aral Sea catastrophe, as well as solving general socio-ecological problems of the region.

In 1997, IFAS included the Interstate Coordination Water Commission (ICWC) and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD). As a result, the Fund's mandate included issues of interstate relations on water resources management, environmental protection and socio-economic development.

Having the task to implement this broad mandate, IFAS and its structural subdivisions were able to provide a regional platform for dialogue and cooperation in solving the most acute water and environmental problems in the region. IFAS activity promoted the development of qualitatively new interstate relations in the region by strengthening regional cooperation and conflict-free resolution of complex water issues.

IFAS has achieved significant success since 1993, including:

Creation and maintenance of a unique high-level platform for uniting Central Asian countries, aimed not only at solving the Aral Sea crisis, but also increasing the importance of effective and sustainable management of natural and water resources as a basis for regional cooperation. Issues of the Aral Sea crisis are under constant control and attention of the Heads of State of Central Asia, as evidenced by holding 12 IFAS Summits over 30 years including the meeting of the Heads of States on 15 September 2023 in Dushanbe.

Providing an effective mechanism for managing transboundary waters of the Amudarya and Syr Darya, including through operational management and monitoring of water resources of interstate sources, supported by scientific instruments and decision support tools.

Significantly increased awareness of the Aral Sea problem and the state of the environment in this area, recognized as an ecological disaster, attracting the attention of scientists, journalists and development partners around the world. IFAS received observer status in the UN General Assembly in 2008, and since then the General Assembly of the Organization has adopted a number of resolutions on IFAS and issues related to the Aral Sea basin.

Development and implementation of the four Aral Sea basin programs, promoting the improvement of the ecological and socio-economic situation in the interests of 60 million inhabitants of the basin. Within the framework of these programs, dozens of regional and national projects were implemented aimed at improving water resource management, improving drinking water supply, sanitation and health care, increasing productivity and efficiency of irrigation, strengthening hydrometeorological services and generally increasing the ecological sustainability of the countries of the Aral Sea basin.

Preservation and restoration of part of the Aral Sea - the Northern (Small) Aral Sea. As a result of the implementation of water management projects, the flows reaching the Northern Aral increased from 350 m³/s to 700 m³/s, the sea surface area increased from 2414 km² to 3288 km², the volume of water increased from 15.6 km³ to 27.1 km³, water salinity decreased from 23 to 17 g/l.

Assisting in solving ecological problems of the Aral Sea, including large-scale afforestation on the territory of more than 1.7 million hectares of the drained bottom of the Aral Sea in Uzbekistan and 337 thousand hectares in Kazakhstan, which reduces the amount of wind-borne harmful substances and the rate of land degradation.

Restoring the biodiversity of the Northern Aral Sea and the Aral Sea region. With the implementation of water management and environmental measures, the volume of fish caught increased from 0.4 to 8 thousand tons per year. In addition, 8 nature reserves, 2 national natural parks, and 1 state biosphere reserve have been created and operate in the Aral Sea region, including the Jeyran Ecological Center, and Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve.

The Fund still plays an important role in maintaining dialogue, cooperation and relationships both between the countries of the region and the countries of the region with the international community, to solve existing problems and counter modern and future challenges.

This report provides an overview of the activities of IFAS during the chairmanship of Tajikistan. The report highlights key achievements in the implementation of ASBP-4 and other regional projects, as well as progress made in improving IFAS.

The report is intended for a wide audience, including policymakers, practitioners and the general public. It is hoped that the report will contribute to a better understanding of the problems faced by the countries of Aral Sea basin and the efforts being made to address them.



TAJIKISTAN'S PRESIDENCY IN IFAS

Tajikistan accepted the presidency of IFAS in 2020. During its chairmanship, Tajikistan focused on the following key areas:

Strengthening regional cooperation: Tajikistan has worked to promote closer cooperation and coordination among IFAS founding states in the areas of water resources management, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Approval and Implementation of the Action Program for assistance to the countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4): ASBP-4 is a comprehensive program aimed at solving ecological and socio-economic problems of the Aral Sea basin. The Tajik side made every effort to ensure the implementation of ASBP-4 projects. Within the framework of this program, a number of national and regional projects with a total budget of more than 650 million US dollars are at the execution stage.

Improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS: The work of the Regional Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS has been resumed and a lot of work has been done to promote this issue, including two stages out of five have been completed, and the third and fourth stages are currently in progress.

Representing the voice of the Central Asian region within the framework of international and global water-energy, ecological and climate processes. Under the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan, IFAS and the Central Asian region were adequately represented within the framework of international and global water, ecological and climate processes, including the 9th World Water Forum, the Asia-Pacific Water Summit, the UN 2023 Water Conference, the 26th, 27th and 28th sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and others, within the framework of which various events dedicated to the region were organized.

In general, the Tajik side has made a lot of efforts to make IFAS work effective, to present the Fund on the international arena as a unique regional institution for solving complex water and ecological problems, to attract the attention of the international community to the region, to strengthen partnership with the UN and other international organizations, and to enhance the regional cooperation.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF HEADS OF FOUNDING STATES OF IFAS

The meeting of the Council of Heads of Founding States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea was held on 15 September 2023 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The meeting took place in a landmark year for the countries of the region when the 30th anniversary of the Fund was celebrated.

The meeting was chaired by the President of IFAS, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Emomali Rahmon. The Presidents of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Central Asia/Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia took part in its work.

At the meeting, a number of issues related to the activities of IFAS were discussed, including the outcomes of the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Fund, improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS and the transition of chairmanship of the Fund.

The meeting participants expressed a shared commitment to solving the problems facing the Aral Sea basin and working together to achieve this goal. They recognized the need for close regional cooperation and coordination and proposed a number of specific

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measures to improve water and energy resource management, protect the environment and improve the living standards of people living in the Aral Sea basin.

The meeting noted the progress made in the implementation of ASBP-4 projects but also emphasized the need for further efforts to mobilize resources and ensure timely completion of all projects.

The meeting also supported efforts to improve IFAS and increase the effectiveness of its implementation of its mandate. The participants agreed to speed up work in this direction.

The meeting of the Council of Heads of Founding States of IFAS was a positive step forward in solving the problems facing the Aral Sea basin. The meeting confirmed the commitment of the founding states of IFAS to work together and with international partners to achieve the goals of the Fund. However, to achieve these goals, more needs to be done to mobilize resources, improve regional cooperation and improve IFAS.

As a result of the IFAS Summit, four important documents were signed, including:

- Dushanbe Statement by the Heads of Founding States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea;
- Resolution of the Heads of State on the results of Tajikistan's chairmanship in IFAS, by which the parties approved the activities of the Fund and its President during the chairmanship of Tajikistan.
- Resolution on activities to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS, by which the Heads of State instructed the Board of the Fund to take measures to speed up this process.
- Resolution to elect the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as President of the IFAS for a period of three years from 1 January 2024.

It is believed that the decisions taken by the Heads of State and the tasks they set will give additional impetus to the development of the Fund's activities and solving of water, energy, and ecological problems in the region.

The documents adopted as a result of the Dushanbe Summit are given in Appendix 1.

IFAS BOARD MEETINGS

During the period of the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in IFAS in 2020-2023, 4 meetings of the IFAS Board were held, at which about 30 decisions were made.

Regular meetings of the IFAS Board are an important tool for fulfilling the Fund's mission. Board meetings provide an opportunity for member states to discuss current problems in the Aral Sea basin and develop joint solutions. They also help strengthen cooperation between member states and attract the attention of the international community to the problems of the Aral Sea.

The meetings were very productive and led to a number of important results. The decisions taken were mainly aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and relationships, as well as strengthening coordination of actions in order to improve the water, energy and ecological situation in the region, including through the implementation of numerous projects.

Among the most significant documents approved by decisions of the Board are:

- Work plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS during the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- Action program for assistance to the countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4);
- Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD-CA);
- Position paper "9th World Water Forum: Central Asia for peace and development. Priorities, actions and tasks for the future»;
- Plan for organizing and conducting anniversary events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS;
- Report on progress achieved in improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS;
- Joint Statement of Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference.

In general, the IFAS Board meetings during the chairmanship of Tajikistan turned out to be successful in fulfilling the mission of the Fund. They reaffirmed the commitment of member states to work together to achieve the goals of the Fund.

The resolutions of the IFAS Board are given in Appendix 2.

IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF IFAS

By the resolution of the IFAS Board on 30 January 2018, the Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS was approved, on the basis of which a Working Group was created to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS (WG). During the chairmanship of Turkmenistan (2017-2019), three meetings of the Working Group were held, as a result of which it was decided to carry out work in the following five stages:

- (i) Objectives of IFAS, taking into account existing agreements, new realities, and requirements of the founding states;
- (ii) Identification of problems in the performance of functions and tasks by structural divisions of IFAS;
- (iii) Preparation of recommendations for improving the organizational structure of IFAS;
- (iv) Preparation of recommendations for improving financial support for the activities of the organizational structure of IFAS management;
- (v) Preparation of proposals for improving the legal framework in order to create an effective and sustainable institutional mechanism for cooperation.

During the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan from 2020 to 2023, 8 meetings of the Working Group were held, within the framework of which, out of 5 agreed stages, two stages were fully completed, the main task and subtasks of the updated Fund were determined. An updated structure has been prepared for Stage 3, which is currently under consideration by the parties. In parallel, the 4th stage is being carried out, concerning issues of financial support for the Fund's activities.

An important point in this process was the active participation of the Kyrgyz Republic in the activities of the Working Group.

During Stage 1 of the IFAS improvement process, WG agreed on the geographical scope, areas of cooperation, as well as the main goal, main and general tasks, and subtasks.

- Geographical scope of IFAS: Aral Sea basin.
- Four areas of cooperation: water resources, energy, environment, socio-economic development.
- Main goal: "Strengthening and developing regional cooperation in the Aral Sea basin in the water, energy, ecological and socio-economic spheres for the sustainable development of the countries of the basin."

For each individual area, a main task and subtasks are formulated, which are based on existing agreements and mandates, and also contribute to their development to solve new regional problems, taking into account modern realities, climate change and the development of comprehensive and inclusive cooperation in the region. In addition, the WG formulated and agreed upon the general objectives of IFAS.

The agreed new goal and tasks/sub-tasks include certain areas and functions that were not previously part of the IFAS mandate, which will require adaptation and improvement of the institutional structure. International experts presented options for the institutional structure, after considering which, delegations from all 5 countries presented their vision of options for an improved institutional structure of IFAS. During further discussions, the delegations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan determined that the future institutional structure would retain the Council

of Heads of State and the Board at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers. It is proposed to abolish the institution of the presidency and the Audit Commission and replace the functions of the latter with independent financial audits.

Regarding the Executive Committee, a position was agreed on its preservation and strengthening, as well as on the permanent location of the office of the Executive Committee with rotation of chairmanship and leadership. The staff must be internationalized (consisting of citizens of all IFAS founding states, with the exception of the technical staff). Additionally, the Executive Committee will be entrusted with the functions of the Secretariat of all commissions. Agreement was also reached on the following points:

- The commissions are subordinate to the IFAS Board, but at the same time coordinate their activities through the Executive Committee;
- The executive bodies of the commissions should remain subordinate to the commissions themselves.



In addition, it was proposed to create a coordination platform for interaction with donors, but not include it in the future institutional structure of IFAS.

In order to develop recommendations on improvement of financing mechanisms and sustainability of IFAS organizational management structure and to initiate discussion within Stage 4, at the request of the WG, the international group of experts provided general initial information on the international practice of financing of joint mechanisms/basin water management organizations and mapping of baseline data of financial flows of IFAS institutions.

Based on the progress achieved in improving IFAS, further actions are proposed:

- Continuing the discussion on Stage 3 and agreeing on issues/items on which there are currently differences in the institutional structure of the improved IFAS;
- As part of Stage 4, the development and approval of proposals to improve financial support for the activities of the organizational structure of IFAS management;
- As part of Stage 5, preparation of proposals to improve the legal framework in order to create an effective and sustainable institutional mechanism for cooperation.

It is obvious that the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS is complex and requires more time, resources and a willingness to compromise. However, the progress made to date has been significant.

The successful completion of the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, this will allow IFAS to more effectively fulfill its mandate to solve ecological, water-energy and socio-economic problems of the Aral Sea basin. Secondly, it will strengthen the institutional structure of the Fund and make it more accountable to the founding states. Thirdly, it will help attract new resources to the Fund and support its long-term sustainability.

A more detailed report on the progress made in improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS, approved by the Board of the Fund, is given in Appendix 3.

ANNIVERSARY EVENTS DEDICATED TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF IFAS

The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2023. During this period, IFAS and its structural divisions were able to provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation to solve the most pressing regional problems related to water and the environment. The Fund's activities contribute to the development of qualitatively new interstate relations in the region, strengthening partnerships, and conflict-free resolution of complex water management issues.

During the IFAS Board meeting on 28 November 2022 in Dushanbe the Board members adopted the Resolution «On organization and holding of events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS», according to which the Plan for organization and holding of events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS (hereinafter - Plan) was approved.

The document consists of 10 areas of activity, which include 35 events. All anniversary events were held with great success and contributed to raising awareness about the activities of IFAS, the problems of the Aral Sea basin and the efforts taken by the governments of the countries in the region to solve them.

One of the main anniversary events was the International Conference «Central Asia: Towards Sustainable Future through Strong Regional Institution», which was held in Dushanbe on 6-7 June 2023.

The conference was attended by delegations from the countries of the region at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, World Bank Vice-President for Europe and Central Asia, European Union Special Representative for Central Asia and other senior representatives of international development partners, as well as representatives of science, academia, civil society and other stakeholders.

The conference discussed IFAS achievements over the past 30 years, as well as the challenges and opportunities facing the Fund in the future. The participants also adopted a resolution confirming their commitment to joint work on solving environmental, water-energy, and socio-economic problems in the Aral Sea basin.

At the Conference, veterans and staff of the Fund, as well as those who contributed to the establishment of IFAS and the development of regional cooperation were awarded commemorative medals.

One of the most meaningful areas of activity in this context was “Preparation and holding of national and regional events in the founding countries of IFAS,” which consisted of eight events: organization and holding of thematic conferences on the problems of the Aral Sea basin and regional cooperation, cultural and sports events, various competitions at the national and regional levels, actions in support of the population living in the Aral crisis zones, trips to areas prone to environmental disaster and others. In the founding states of IFAS, with the involvement of local government authorities, numerous competitions were held among children, adolescents and young people, and awards were presented to the winners. The results of competitions at the regional level were summed up and awards were presented within the framework of the International Conference “Central Asia: Towards Sustainable Future through Strong Regional Institution.”

The expedition within the framework of item 9 of the Plan “Organization of an expedition from the runoff formation zone to the Aral Sea, the Amudarya River basin” turned out to be interesting, informative and educational for the participants.

25 young professionals and scientists from various professions from five Central Asian countries from 24 April to 4 May 2023, with the financial and logistical support of the USAID project “Regional Activities in the Field of Water Resources and Vulnerable Environments” visited 3 states of the specified river basin. They covered about 3.5 thousand km and got acquainted with the water management, ecological, and socio-economic situation, the life of the local population, and cultural and historical monuments.

An important direction of the Plan from the point of view of informing the general public was the item “Carrying out information activities”, within the framework of which a virtual photo exhibition was organized, various videos were created, collections of articles, posters, calendars, booklets, etc., dedicated to the anniversary were published.

It should be noted that, according to item 10 “Working with development partners”, a number of international development partners also participated in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of IFAS. The European Union, World Bank, ADB, OSCE, USAID, GIZ and other partners supported the anniversary events.

The summit of the Heads of Founding States of IFAS, which took place on 15 September 2023 in Dushanbe, became the culmination of anniversary events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS.

At the Summit, the Heads of State discussed the achievements of IFAS over the past 30 years, as well as the main challenges and prospects facing the Fund in the future, and adopted the Dushanbe Statement.

Anniversary events provided a valuable opportunity to celebrate the achievements of IFAS and draw more attention to the problems of the Aral Sea basin.



ACTION PROGRAM FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE COUNTRIES OF THE ARAL SEA BASIN (ASBP-4)

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS BY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The “Action Program for Assistance to Countries of the Aral Sea Basin” (ASBP-4) was approved by the Resolution of the IFAS Board on 29 June 2021.

It is aimed at improving the well-being of the population living in the Aral Sea basin, further strengthening cooperation between Central Asian countries on water management, ecological and socio-economic issues, effective measures for the rational use of water resources, and adaptation to climate change.

To ensure the implementation of the Program and conduct systematic monitoring of its implementation, the Executive Committee of IFAS is working with international development partners, requesting relevant information on projects implemented in countries on the integrated use of water resources, ecological improvement and conservation of existing natural resources, and the socio-economic well-being of the population of the countries Aral Sea basin.

In the Central Asian region, projects and programs are being implemented **by international development partners** that are directly related to the main directions of ASBP-4.

With the support of **the World Bank and the International Development Association**, projects are being implemented in support of ASBP-4 totaling \$163.2 million, including the project “Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Program for the Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB)” for the period 2018-2023 with a budget of US\$3.7 million, the project “RESILAND CA+: Sustainable Landscape Restoration Project in Tajikistan” for the period 2022-2027 with a budget of US\$35.5

million and the project “RESILAND CA+: Sustainable restoration of landscapes in Uzbekistan» for the period 2022-2028 with a budget of 124 million US dollars.

The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) is implementing projects in support of ASBP-4 for a total amount of 30.8 million euros, including “Green Central Asia” with a budget of 8 million euros; project “Climate Risk Management” with a budget of 10 million euros; project “Water management related to climate change” with a budget of 12.5 million euros. Active work is also underway to improve the efficiency of water use in the Aral Sea region within the framework of the GIZ project “Ecologically oriented regional development in the Aral Sea region (Eco-Aral)” with a budget of 0.3 million euros.

Supported by **the European Union** is implementing projects in support of ASBP-4 totaling 14 million euros, including the project “European Union - Central Asia: Environment, Climate Change and Water Cooperation (WECOOP III)” with a budget of 2.996 million Euro; the project “Ensuring Sustainable Energy Connectivity in Central Asia” (SECCA) with a budget of 6.8 million euros; project “Central Asian Dialogue to stimulate intersectoral financing based on the water-energy-food nexus” with a budget of 1.25 million euros; project “Hydro 4U - Demonstration Small hydropower potential in Central Asia” with a budget of 1 million euros; project “WE-ACT: Climate-smart water allocation” with a budget of 0.6 million euros; project “Dialogues on national policies within the framework of the EU water initiative in Central Asia” with a budget of 0.58 million euros; project “Support to Central Asian countries in strengthening the safety of tailings dumps” with a budget of 0.23 million euros; support of the European Union in carrying out various IFAS activities at the regional and global levels for the period 2021-2023 with a budget of 0.55 million euros.

As part of the implementation of *the “Central Asia Water and Energy Program” (CAWEP)*, administered by the World Bank with financial support from the European Union, the Governments of Switzerland and the United Kingdom, to improve water and energy security at the regional level and in the countries of Central Asia, activities worth 8.5 million US dollars.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) projects are being implemented in support of ASBP-4 for a total amount of 8.90 million euros, including the Blue Peace Central Asia Initiative with a budget of 4 million euros; the project “Cryosphere Observation and Modeling for Improved Adaptation in Central Asia” (CROMO-ADAPT) with a budget of 3.1 million euros and in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan the “Groundwater Resource in Transboundary Aquifers” (GGRETA) with a budget of 1.8 million euros.

Supported by USAID in support of ASBP-4, the “Regional Project on Water Resources and Environment” (WAVE) is being implemented with a budget of \$3.278 million, which is aimed at strengthening cooperation between Central Asian countries in the field of water resources.

Supported by The Asian Development Bank, in support of ASBP-4, is implementing a regional project “Improving Access and Strengthening Innovations for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in selected CAREC countries and the Caucuses” with a budget of \$0.5 million.

Supported by The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in support of ASBP-4 is implementing the “IHE Delft Partnership Program for Water Resources and Development”, within the framework of which the project “ASB&LCB: Aral Sea Basin and Lake Chad Basin - a space for the creation and exchange of interdisciplinary knowledge for sustainable management of river basins in conditions of the climate crisis with a budget of 0.39 million euros.

There are currently 35 projects being implemented by international development partners for total cost 175.5 million US dollars and 54.135 million euros, of which activities worth more than 16.25 million US dollars and 28.97 million euros were carried out.

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PROJECTS IN THE IFAS FOUNDING STATES

In *the Republic of Kazakhstan*, within the framework of ASBP-4, the project “Improvement of Irrigation and Drainage Systems” (Phase-2), financed from the republican budget (70%) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (30%) is being implemented for a total amount of \$226.5 million US dollars in the period 2019-2023. Of these, about 170 million US dollars were disbursed. The “Project for the reconstruction of the Kyzylorda hydroelectric complex on the Syrdarya River” has been implemented in the amount of \$7.4 million. A feasibility study for the project “Regional development and restoration of the northern part of the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan” in the amount of 1.5 million US dollars is also being developed. ASBP-4 projects in the Kazakh part of the Aral Sea basin have implemented projects totaling approximately \$190 million.

In *the Republic of Tajikistan*, the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, the Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Hydrometeorology Agency of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and other departments are implementing a number of projects:

- “Water resources management in the Pyanj River Basin” for the period 2016-2024 (ADB, Japan, Green Climate Fund - USD 46.6 million).
- “Climate Change and Disaster Resilient Irrigation and Drainage Modernization in the Vakhsh River Basin” (ADB – \$35.2 million).
- “Improving water resources management in the Khatlon region” (IDB, Saudi Development Fund, OPEC - \$53.5 million).
- “Program for adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its consequences for the Aral Sea basin” (Green Climate Fund - \$9 million).
- “Dushanbe Water supply and Sanitation Project” for the period 2018-2025 (ADB - 45.8 million US dollars).

Several social projects are also being implemented for a total amount of \$15.8 million, of which \$1.6 million has been spent.

with a total budget of 205.9 million US dollars are being implemented in the Republic of Tajikistan within the framework of ASBP-4, of which about 52.76 million US dollars have currently been disbursed.

In addition, a number of projects are planned for implementation to provide rural areas with drinking water and sanitation, and improve water resources and irrigation management in Tajikistan for a total amount of \$92 million.

Due to the current contributions *of Turkmenistan* to IFAS, the following projects were put into operation in 2022: “Creation of a forest on an area of 20 thousand hectares of land east of the Botendag hill in Dashoguz velayat”, “Water supply of the village. “Chatagach” of the geneshlik “Taze-Oba” in the Akdepe of Dashoguz velayat”, “Reconstruction of water supply networks of the Shaherche named after S. Turkmenbashi of Dashoguz velayat”. Projects for the reconstruction of inter-farm sewers, providing the population with drinking water are at the implementation stage, the construction and reconstruction of water supply systems in rural areas, the installation of water purification systems, as well as the construction and reconstruction of water supply networks and water pipelines are being carried out. Design and survey work is underway for new projects. The total amount of project implementation for the period 2021-2022 amounted to 4.7 million US dollars.

In *the Republic of Uzbekistan*, the Ministry of Water Resources is implementing the “Climate Change Adaptive Water Resources Management in the Aral Sea

Basin” project financed by ADB in the amount of \$194.8 million. The project provides for (I) modernization of main canals; (II) modernization of off-farm irrigation and drainage systems and on-farm water resources management; (III) strengthening policies and institutions for climate-adaptive and sustainable water resources management.

The State Forestry Committee, with the participation of the IFAS Agency and the Nukus branch of the Executive Committee IFAS, is implementing the project “Organization of systemic forest plantations in the Aral Sea region and on the dried bottom of the Aral Sea.” The project provides for the creation of protective forest plantations on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea from local trees and shrubs on an area of 13,742 hectares. The total amount is \$0.676 million. USA, of which 65% has been developed.

With the support of the UNECE, the project “Improving the safety of tailings dumps and preventing emergency water pollution in Uzbekistan and outside Central Asia” is being implemented with a budget of US\$0.109 million.

In general, under ASBP-4 projects in the Republic of Uzbekistan, projects totaling approximately \$195.5 million.



CONCLUSIONS

In all areas of activity within the framework of ASBP-4, regional projects are at the implementation stage, implemented by international development partners with a total budget of 175.5 million US dollars and 54.135 million euros; national projects in the IFAS founding states with a total budget of more than 700 million US dollars.

The implementation of these projects will help improve the ecological situation in the Aral Sea basin and improve the standard of living of the region's population.

The above overview of the implementation of ASBP-4 projects was prepared based on data provided by the countries of the region and development partners. However, it should be noted that the information presented does not reflect the entire range of work carried out within the framework of various national and regional projects and programs aimed at improving the ecological and socio-economic situation in the countries of the Aral Sea basin.



The volume of work carried out by the countries of the region and development partners in areas such as water resources, climate, energy, agriculture, environmental protection, etc., which are covered in ASBP-4 as separate goals and objectives, is many times greater than the data presented. However, due to the lack of complete data, both due to indirect non-compliance with the ASBP-4 projects, and due to the lack of a monitoring and reporting mechanism, it is not possible to prepare a full review and analysis that could reflect the real picture, determine progress, identify gaps and omissions in order to further improve work in this direction.

The Executive Committee of IFAS sought through the creation of a coordination mechanism, providing for regular meetings with international development partners, to establish coordination and interaction between the countries of the region, IFAS structural subdivisions and development partners on the implementation of projects and programs corresponding to the goals and objectives of ASBP-4. In this context, three meetings with donors, and numerous bilateral and multilateral meetings were held, which gave some results. Nevertheless, to achieve the desired result, strong cooperation and mobilization of efforts of all parties involved, their readiness to present comprehensive data, as well as the necessary capacity for processing, analysis and preparation of the report and recommendations are necessary.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

One of the priority areas of IFAS activity during the period under review was to expand international cooperation, caused by the need to attract the attention of the world community to the problems of the Aral Sea basin and involve stakeholders in solving them, including through the implementation of regional projects and programs, including ASBP-4.

Within the frame of this process, numerous online and offline meetings were held with the development partners including donor countries, UN system agencies, and financial institutions.

In addition, close cooperation was carried out with world, international and regional organizations leading the preparation and implementation process, as well as state organizers of regional, international and global water events to represent the voice and vision of the Central Asian region within the framework of these events.

INTERACTION WITH THE UN SYSTEM

Since its creation, IFAS and its institutions have been active in establishing and developing relationships with the United Nations system. One of the results of these efforts was the granting of observer status to the United Nations in 2008. Over the past period, a number of resolutions of the UN General Assembly on cooperation between IFAS and the UN have been adopted, which served as the basis for the consistent development and raising of their interaction to a qualitatively new level.

During Tajikistan's chairmanship of IFAS, the UN General Assembly adopted a new resolution "On cooperation between the UN and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea."

This resolution notes the need to further improve the activities of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in order to strengthen regional cooperation in areas such as socio-economic development, environmental protection and disaster response, water

resources management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, information exchange, science and innovation, and other related fields.

It also notes the importance of strengthening cooperation and coordination between the United Nations system and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, and emphasizes the importance of developing and effectively implementing regional environmental programs for sustainable development in Central Asia, including assistance programs for the countries of the Aral Sea basin.

The resolutions adopted during this time on cooperation between IFAS and the UN provided the Fund with a good opportunity to carry out closer interactions both with the organization itself and with its institutions, attracting their financial and technical resources, as well as participating in the most important international and global events.

In this context, the Fund was worthily represented at the UN 2023 Water Conference, which took place on 22-24 March in New York under the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Within the framework of the Conference, a special session dedicated to Central Asia was organized, a Joint Statement of the states of the region was presented, and our voluntary commitments to the Water Action Agenda were announced.

It should be noted that for the first time in the history of IFAS, the Executive Committee was given the opportunity to speak from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly and present the Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference.



DONORS MEETINGS

As part of international activities, the Executive Committee of IFAS, with the support of the World Bank CAWEP Program, organized and held a number of Coordination meetings with international development partners.

The meetings were attended by government representatives and heads of relevant ministries and departments of the Fund's founding states, high-ranking representatives of donor countries, heads of regional offices of international organizations and financial institutions, as well as other interested parties.

Coordination meetings were aimed at presenting and ensuring implementation of ASBP-4, establishing connections, strengthening and expanding cooperation with development partners to mutually inform about ongoing activities and plans for the future, ensuring synergy and joint implementation of projects and programs in the region. They also made it possible to exchange information and opinions about the difficulties and obstacles that partners face in implementing regional projects, ways to overcome them, and to increase the effectiveness of the measures taken.

As a result of the first meeting (18 October 2021), a Joint Statement of the Executive Committee of IFAS and international development partners on the implementation of the Action Program to assist the countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4) was adopted.

During subsequent meetings (26 January 2022 and 20 September 2022), information was regularly provided on the progress made since the launch of the mechanism of coordination meetings, including an analysis of the compliance of projects planned and implemented by development partners in the region with the thematic areas of the ASBP-4, as well as the work done to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

In addition, within the framework of these meetings, the progress in the implementation of the "Action Program to assist the countries of the Aral Sea Basin" (ASBP-4), the Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS for cooperation with international development partners for 2023 in addressing water and ecological issues and further development of regional cooperation within the framework of IFAS.



The results achieved showed the importance of the coordination platform of the Executive Committee of IFAS with development partners, ensuring the exchange of information and coordination between development partners and governments of the countries of the region, including in the implementation and monitoring of regional projects and programs, and allowed to expand the scope of the Fund's work and increase its authority and influence on the solution of socio-economic and ecological problems.

MEMORANDUMS OF COOPERATION

In order to strengthen and expand international cooperation, the Executive Committee of IFAS signed memorandums of understanding with the German Agency for International Cooperation and the Secretariat of the 9th World Water Forum.

The Memorandum of Understanding with GIZ aims to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in the field of sustainable water management in the Aral Sea basin. The implementation of the Memorandum brought a number of benefits for the region, including

improved cooperation in the field of water resources, energy and the environment, increased investment in projects in the water-energy sector and the environment, as well as expanded capabilities of EC IFAS to implement its programs and activities.

The Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretariat of the 9th World Water Forum was aimed at the participation of IFAS at the 9th World Water Forum, which took place in Dakar, Senegal in March 2022. Within the framework of the memorandum, the parties cooperated in the following areas:

- Preparation of IFAS participation in the 9th World Water Forum;
- Organizing events to raise awareness about the problems of the Aral Sea basin;
- providing IFAS with a platform to disseminate information about its work to address the problems of the Aral Sea basin at the international level.

The signing of these memorandums of understanding was an important step for IFAS in strengthening and expanding international cooperation in solving the problems of the Aral Sea basin.

PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATION OF VARIOUS SESSIONS AND EXHIBITIONS AT INTERNATIONAL WATER EVENTS

Central Asian subregional preparatory conference for the 9th World Water Forum “Water Security for Peace and Development”

The Central Asian subregional preparatory conference for the 9th World Water Forum was held on 19-20 October 2021 in Dushanbe.

The conference was aimed at identifying and discussing the main directions of regional processes and key topics for dialogue during the events of the 9th Forum, as well as formulating and agreeing on the regional agenda for the 9th World Water Forum according to its priority themes and the most important issues for the region Central Asia and strengthening regional cooperation and partnerships at all levels to contribute to the implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028. Within the framework of the Conference, 6 parallel thematic sessions were held:

1. Ensuring universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation to respond to contemporary challenges, including COVID-19;
2. Transboundary water cooperation for sustainable development;
3. Effective management of water resources to increase agricultural production and provide employment in rural areas;
4. Water, energy, food and environment nexus;
5. Climate change adaptation and water-related disaster risk reduction;
6. Water sector financing.

All thematic sessions of the Conference were considered in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Conference was attended by representatives of governments, ministries and departments of Central Asian countries, the World Water Council, the Secretariat of the 9th World Water Forum, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, NGOs, civil society, scientists, experts and others.

As a result of the Conference, the “Resolution of the participants of the Central Asian subregional preparatory conference for the 9th World Water Forum “Water Security for Peace and Development” was adopted and a Position Paper of the Central Asian

countries on the priority topics of the Forum “9th World Water Forum: Central Asia for peace and development. Priorities, actions and tasks for the future.»

9th World Water Forum

According to the Resolution of the IFAS Board of 22 February 2022, the Executive Committee of IFAS took an active part in the work of the 9th World Water Forum “Water Security for Peace and Development”, which took place on March 21-26, 2022 in Dakar, Republic of Senegal.

The 9th World Water Forum is organized by the Government of the Republic of Senegal and the World Water Council in collaboration with other partners. The forum aimed to activate actions to achieve the water goals and targets contained in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and focused on 4 priorities: “Water Security and Sanitation”, “Cooperation”, “Water for rural development» and «Means and tools».

Within the framework of the 9th World Water Forum, the Executive Committee of IFAS organized a special session “Cooperation of Central Asian countries to ensure water security under the influence of climate change,” which was attended by delegations from Central Asian countries, representatives of international development partners, academia, civil society and private sector.

The special session was organized with the aim of attracting the attention of the world community to the problems of the Aral Sea basin and their solution, presenting the vision of the Central Asian countries on the priorities of the 9th WWF, presentation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4) to donor countries and international organizations to ensure its implementation, as well as the exchange of views and experience on solving water-related issues.

Within the framework of the 9th Forum, the results of the Central Asian Regional Preparatory Conference, which was held on 19-20 October 2021 in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, including the Position Paper of the Central Asian countries on the priority topics of the Forum “9th World water forum: Central Asia for peace and development. Priorities, actions and tasks for the future.»

This Position Paper presents the vision of the Central Asian countries on the priority themes of the 9th World Water Forum and highlights relevant issues for the region related to water security for peace and development. As a basis for joint action, the document is focused on such international documents as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, as well as the regional program - ASBP- 4.

The results of the special session became a contribution to the outcome document of the 9th World Water Forum - the Dakar Declaration: “Blue Deal” on water security and sanitation for peace and development.

2nd International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028”

In accordance with the Resolution of the IFAS Board of 22 February 2022, the Executive Committee of IFAS took an active part in the 2nd High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028”, which was held on 6-9 June 2022 in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan.

The conference was organized by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in cooperation with the United Nations and other partners and became a key conference in the process of preparation for the UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Goals of the International Water Decade, which will be held in 2023 in New York (UN 2023 Water Conference).

The 2nd Dushanbe Conference made a significant contribution to the 2023 mid-term comprehensive review of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 75/212 of 21 December 2020. The conference called for accelerated action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) and other internationally agreed water-related goals, including those contained in the 2030 Development Agenda.

Within the framework of the Conference, the Executive Committee of IFAS, in pursuance of the Resolution of the IFAS Board of 22 February 2022, together with the World Bank and other partners, organized a Regional Forum on Water Cooperation in Central Asia.

At the Forum, it was emphasized that in recent years the countries of Central Asia have been dynamically developing regional cooperation. The participants took the initiative to prepare a Joint Statement of the Central Asian countries for the UN 2023 Water Conference. Development partners expressed their readiness to support cooperation between Central Asian countries through financing, dialogue, exchange of new knowledge, and strengthening the institutional mechanism for cooperation.

The results of the Forum became a significant contribution to the Outcome Documents of the 2nd Dushanbe Conference: Summary of the Co-Chairs, Final Declaration “From Dushanbe 2022 to New York 2023” and Call for Action and Partnership.

The Government of Tajikistan presented the Outcome Documents of the 2nd Dushanbe Conference at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the the Preparatory Meeting of the General Assembly for the UN 2023 Water Conference and other relevant events.

Regional workshop “Central Asia towards the UN 2023 Water Conference”

On September 20, 2022, a regional workshop entitled “Central Asia towards the UN 2023 Water Conference” was held in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan.

The workshop was organized by the Executive Committee of IFAS with financial support from USAID and GIZ, as well as the Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP), administered by the World Bank and funded by the European Union, Switzerland (through SECO) and the United Kingdom (through DFID).

The main goal of this workshop was to demonstrate the cooperation and cohesion of the Central Asian countries in making commitments for new actions to solve water problems.

The workshop was aimed at familiarizing participants with the goals, objectives and principles of the UN 2023 Water Conference, discussing the vision of the countries of Central Asia on the topics of the Interactive Dialogues, as well as possible voluntary commitments of the countries of the region and development partners for inclusion in the Water Action Agenda of the UN Conference.

The workshop also discussed the results of the Regional Forum on Water Cooperation in Central Asia, which took place within the framework of the 2nd Dushanbe Water Decade Conference from 6-9 June 2022, as well as draft initiatives, commitments and key messages contained in the Joint Statement of the Central Asian region for the UN 2023 Water Conference.

During the workshop, proposals were received from the countries of the region and development partners on voluntary commitments for inclusion in the Joint Statement of Central Asia and development partners.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the governments of Central Asian countries, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, other interested international bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, etc.

United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of The Implementation of the Objectives of The International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 (March 22-24, 2023, New York, USA)»

The UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Goals of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (UN 2023 Water Conference) was held in New York on 22-24 March 2023, co-chaired by the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The conference aimed to assess progress made in achieving the goals of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028, and accelerating action to achieve SDG 6 and other internationally agreed water goals.

The conference brought together more than 10 thousand participants, including more than 6,500 in person, including the UN Secretary General and his deputies, 8 heads of state, 3 vice presidents, 3 heads of government, 6 vice prime ministers, about 120 ministers and 17 heads of intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies.

Central Asian states took an active part in the work of the Conference, including through statements in plenary sessions, interventions in interactive dialogues, special sessions and side events, and co-organization of side events.

As co-organizer of the UN 2023 Water Conference, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan was elected one of the two Presidents of this historic conference and presided over three days of its work, while representing the Central Asian region as President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

The countries of the region and the structural divisions of the Fund, together with other development partners, organized side events within the framework of the Conference: “Water-energy-food-environment nexus”, “Water sustainability, stability and inclusion in the Asia-Pacific region”, “From desert to forests: a multifaceted



approach for the revival of the Aral Sea”, “2025 the International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation”, etc.

One of the important for the region was the High-Level Side Event “Central Asia: Commitments for Water Action Agenda”, organized by the Executive Committee of IFAS jointly with the World Bank. For its preparation and implementation, the Executive Committee of IFAS organized a number of regional preparatory events, as a result of which a Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference was developed and approved by the IFAS Board on 28 November 2022 in Dushanbe.

It should be noted that for the first time in the history the Executive Committee of IFAS was given the opportunity to speak from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly and present the Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference (Annex 4).

A number of voluntary commitments to the Water Action Agenda have also been registered by some countries of the region and the Executive Committee of IFAS.

The results of the Conference, as well as the commitments made by the countries of the region at the national and regional levels, will certainly contribute to increasing the attention of the governments of the

countries of the region and development partners and their adoption of new innovative solutions to further improve the water management, ecological and, in general, socio-economic situation in region.

Field trip to the Senegal River Basin Development Organization

On 23-30 March 2023, a study tour was organized for specialists and experts from Central Asian countries and representatives of the Executive Committee of IFAS to the Senegal River Basin Development Organization (OMVS). The purpose of the visit was to study the activities of this organization, which unites Guinea, Mauritania, Mali and Senegal in managing the water resources of the Senegal River, and to assess the possibility of using the experience of OMVS to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

The participants of the study tour visited the cities of Dakar and St. Louis. They met with representatives of the management of the OMVS and visited a number of sites related to the management of water resources of the Senegal River.

During the visit, participants learned about the history of the creation of the OMVS, its main goals and objectives, as well as the organizational structure. They also learned



about the organization's activities in the field of water use, irrigation, hydropower, environmental protection and other areas.

Participants highly appreciated OMVS's experience in the field of water management of transboundary rivers. They noted the significant success of the organization in developing cooperation between the countries of the Senegal River basin in this area.

At the end of the tour, participants shared their observations, acquired knowledge and experience, as well as conclusions regarding the possibility of using OMVS experience in the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

Field trip to the Mekong River Basin Commission

From 1-7 April 2023, in order to become familiar with the activities and organizational structure of the Mekong River Basin Commission, a study tour to Laos was organized for members of the Working Group on Improving the Organizational Structure and Legal Framework of IFAS and representatives of IFAS structural divisions. The trip was organized by the Executive Committee of IFAS with financial support from the Central Asian Water and Energy Program, managed by the World Bank.

The Mekong River Basin Commission (MRC) is a river basin organization that draws on more than fifty years of experience in the region. The organization has its origins in the Mekong River Committee, created by the UN in 1957. The Mekong River basin includes Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Vietnam. The MRC in its current form was formed in April 1995, with the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin by these countries.

The study tour to the Mekong River Basin Commission provided an opportunity for members of the Working Group to become familiar with the organizational structure of the MRC, monitoring rules and planning methods for the development of the Mekong River Basin, the role of the People's Republic of China and the Union of Myanmar in the MRC as dialogue partners, and also visit the Nam Ngum dam.

Participants also received the necessary knowledge and information about cross-border cooperation between countries members of the Commission, became familiar

with the history and experience of the MRC, which can be useful for discussion and facilitate dialogue in the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

As part of the trip on 2-3 April representatives of the Executive Committee of IFAS and its divisions and members of the Working Group also took part in the International Conference of the 4th Summit of the Mekong River Commission, dedicated to innovation and cooperation for water security and sustainability of the Mekong.

Advanced training course for Central Asian specialists at the University of Delft

In preparation for the UN 2023 Water Conference, various initiatives and areas of cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands were launched.

As part of this cooperation, in particular, a training "Advanced training on water policy and strategic planning in the context of climate change" was launched for employees of the Executive Committee of IFAS and specialists from Central Asian countries.

The total number of training participants was 35 people representing Central Asian countries, incl. 5 people are from among young specialists in the water sector.

The training aimed to improve understanding of the complexity of policy development and enhance strategic planning capabilities. Particular attention was paid to how to assess the impact of climate change on water resources and how to integrate this knowledge into planning and policy development, including at the regional/transboundary level.

The training program consisted of several complementary activities that allowed participants to acquire knowledge interactively and develop additional skills, and was also aimed at ensuring that participants learned about problems in other basins and their water resource management practices, exchanged experience and useful information.

This training was conducted in a mixed format (mainly online classes) in the form of courses from January to June 2023 with a trip to IHE Delft (Delft, the Netherlands) at the final stage to take tests, interviews and receive a certificate.

Some of the training participants also took part in the UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Goals of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, which took place on 22-24 March 2023 in New York.

At the final stage of the training, in the second half of June 2023, participants visited IHE Delft and participated in workshops on strategic planning in the Aral Sea basin and field visits to the Maeslantkering and Kinderdijk water management facilities, in order to become familiar with the monitoring rules, organizational structure and measures taken during sea level rise by the relevant organizations of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The participants successfully completed the training “Advanced training on water policy instruments and strategic planning in the context of climate change” and received certificates from the Delft Institute for water education.

Other international and global events

In addition to the above events, the Executive Committee of IFAS took an active part and adequately represented the Central Asian region in other important international and global events related to water resources, ecology and climate change.

In particular, for the first time in the history of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP), the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia, together with the Executive Committee of IFAS and other development partners, organized the Central Asia Pavilion in the global climate arena within the framework of COP-26. Asia under the slogan “5 countries, 1 region, one voice” (31 October– 12 November 2021, Glasgow, Scotland, UK).

As part of the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit (23-24 April 2022 in Kumamoto, Japan), the Executive Committee of IFAS co-organized two sessions: “Water and the environment from source to sea - multi-level governance





for sustainable natural and social environment» and «Water and food - Sustainable management of water resources in agriculture in the Asian region.»

The Executive Committee IFAS also took part in World Water Week, which took place from 29 August to 1 September 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden. As part of the water week, the Executive Committee of IFAS organized an exhibition stand and held a special session “Seeing the invisible: the importance of water in the development of regional cooperation in Central Asia.”

The Executive Committee of IFAS also actively participated in the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (6 - 18 November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt) and, together with other partners, organized various thematic sessions related to adaptation to climate change, promoting nexus approaches, strengthening regional cooperation in the field of water resources and ecology, etc.

As part of the World Water Week 2023, which took place from 20-24 August in Stockholm, Sweden, the Executive Committee of IFAS organized an online

exhibition stand of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. The IFAS exhibition stand demonstrated videos, brochures and booklets containing information about the problems of the drying up of the Aral Sea, the impact of climate change and sandstorms that carry tons of pesticide-contaminated dust to glaciers, resulting in their melting, which are the main sources of water resources in the Central Asian region, as well as measures taken by the countries of the region to address water, ecological and socio-economic issues, as well as a page with information about the activities of IFAS.

Within the framework of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (30 November – 12 December 2023, Dubai, UAE), the Executive Committee of IFAS acted as a partner in organizing the Water for Climate Pavilion which united more than 60 partners to unify the voice of the international community to further promote water action as climate solutions.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public awareness is an important factor for creating a positive image in the external environment, establishing and maintaining cooperation with all stakeholders by informing the general public about various activities.

This activity was carried out through the official website of the Executive Committee of IFAS, special pages of the Executive Committee of IFAS on social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, publications, speeches in the media, organization of various conferences, thematic sessions, exhibitions and other events within the framework of global Forums, national, regional and international Conferences and other events that made it possible to more widely highlight and discuss existing problems and develop recommendations for further action.

ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

During the period of the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in IFAS, one meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia, four meetings of the Board of the Fund, three coordination meetings of the Executive Committee with development partners, three high-level conferences, seminars, round tables and other meetings were held, where the problems of the Aral Sea basin and mitigating the effects of its drying out has been discussed at various levels. The structural divisions of the Fund periodically published publications reflecting the most pressing issues related to the Aral tragedy. Speeches by experts and scientists were organized on radio and television, many articles and materials were published on the official websites of news agencies, newspapers and magazines in the countries of the region and abroad, a lot of work was carried out with the population by organizing round tables, workshops and trainings, films and videos were made and photo exhibitions on the Aral issue were organized.

ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY TO IFAS AS PART OF GLOBAL EVENTS RELATED TO WATER AND CLIMATE

In order to attract the attention of the world community, international development partners, academia, civil society and the private sector to the problems of the Aral Sea basin and their solution in the framework of global events, including the 26-27-28 sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2021-2022-2023), 9th World Water Forum (21-26 March 2022), 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit (23-24 April 2022), Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action «Water for sustainable development», 2018-2028. (6-9 June 2022), World Water Weeks (2022 -2023), Fifth Cairo Water Week (2022), UN 2023 Water Conference (22-24 March 2023) the Executive Committee of IFAS with the support of development partners sessions, side events, exhibition stands, bilateral and multilateral meetings were organized.

Sessions, meetings and side events were dedicated to the problems of the Aral Sea basin, the impact of climate change on water resources, the region's policies and practices in the field of water resources and climate change. Information was also provided on the situation of water cooperation in the region, positive developments in all directions, challenges faced by the region, and measures taken by countries, including through interaction within the framework of IFAS, to combat them.

The exhibition stands of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, as part of global water events, demonstrated the problems of drying up the Aral Sea, the relationship between water and climate change, as well as the impact of climate change on the melting of glaciers, which are the main sources of water resources in the Central Asian region.

Above mentioned information, including the measures taken by countries of the region to address water, ecological and socio-economic issues and achieve the SDGs, were provided in the form of books, booklets, brochures and other publication materials. In addition, visitors to the IFAS exhibition stand were provided with various souvenirs with the logos of IFAS and the 30th anniversary of IFAS.

IFAS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

IFAS website

Since 2020, official website of the Executive Committee of IFAS was launched by the following link <https://ecifas-tj.org/>, which covers detailed information about the Fund and introduces visitors to its multifaceted activities. The site is periodically updated with new materials and updated taking into account the latest news in Russian and English. The opening of the IFAS website contributed to greater awareness of the international community about the Aral Sea crisis and problems in its basin, as well as about the activities of IFAS and its structural divisions to solve them and improve the ecological and socio-economic situation in the region.

The website provides detailed information about programs and projects operating in the Aral Sea basin, such as the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4), the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Program in the Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB) and the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project. The “most important” section is also available on the website, which contains detailed information about the most important initiatives and events of IFAS.

The site has also developed a virtual photo exhibition entitled, “IFAS: 30 years at the service of the peoples of Central Asia,” which demonstrates the 30-year history of the Fund as a platform for regional cooperation and an institution that solves regional problems and counters modern challenges.

Facebook, Twitter

Special pages of the Executive Committee of IFAS on social networks Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/ec.ifas?locale=ru_RU) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/EC_IFAS) have been operating since November 2020 and have a large audience . The pages are periodically updated with new materials and updated with the latest news about meetings, conferences, national, regional and international events in Russian and English.

YouTube

The Executive Committee of IFAS page on YouTube (@user-tg6hh7qh5d) contains videos dedicated to the Aral Sea disaster, the 30th anniversary of IFAS, videos of events and television programs.

EXPEDITIONS

In order to promote regional cooperation by familiarizing young scientists and specialists from relevant departments in Central Asian countries with the ecological, social and water management situation, as well as the consequences of the negative impact of the drying up of the Aral Sea and climate change on the glaciers and water resources of the region, from 19 May 2022 the Executive Committee of IFAS, together with development partners, organized two-week expedition along the Syrdarya River basin - from the runoff formation zone to the Aral Sea. Young scientists and specialists in the water, energy, ecological and other relevant sectors of the countries of Central Asia, representatives of the Executive Committee of IFAS and other structural divisions of IFAS took part in the work of the Expedition. Starting from the Minkush flow formation zone (Meteostation) on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and ending with the Kokaral dam of the Small Aral on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, participants were able to visit reservoirs, canals, gauging stations, pumping stations and other key water bodies located in the four countries of the Syr Darya basin , including the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In April 2023, based on the resolution of the IFAS Board of 28 November 2022 the Executive Committee of IFAS, with the support of development partners, organized another expedition across the Amudarya River basin - from the dried-up bottom of the Aral Sea in the city of Muynak, the Republic of Uzbekistan to the glaciers on the high mountains of the Republic of Tajikistan. The expedition was aimed at familiarizing and acquiring information, as well as new knowledge about the activities of water management structures and the operation of facilities. The expedition was attended by young scientists and specialists in the water, energy, and environmental sectors of Central Asian countries, representatives of the Executive Committee of IFAS, as well as photographers and journalists who, with the materials received, will create an interesting media product. The expedition lasted 12 days and provided participants with the opportunity to visit gauging stations, canals, reservoirs, pumping stations and other water bodies located in the three countries of the Amu Darya basin (the Republic of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Tajikistan).

PUBLICATIONS

Executive Committee of IFAS in the period 2020-2023. The following publications have been prepared and distributed:

- Booklet “Program of actions to provide assistance to the countries of the Aral Sea basin, 2021-2030.”, Dushanbe, 2021. Published in Russian and English;
- Booklet “International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea: main events”, Dushanbe, 2021. Published in Russian and English;
- Booklet “International Year of Glacier Preservation, 2025”, Dushanbe, 2022. Published in Russian and English;
- Brochure “International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea”, Dushanbe, 2021. Published in Russian and English;
- The book “ Program of action to provide assistance to the countries of the Aral Sea basin, 2021-2030.”, Dushanbe, 2021. Published in Russian and English;
- Brochure “9th World Water Forum: Central Asia for peace and development, (priorities, actions and challenges for the future)”, Dushanbe, 2022. Published in Russian and English;
- Brochure “International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea: 30 years in service to the peoples of Central Asia”, Dushanbe, 2023. Published in Russian and English;
- Brochure “International Conference “Central Asia: Towards Sustainable Future through Strong Regional Institution”, dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, Dushanbe, 2023. Published in Russian and English;
- Booklet “The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea is 30 years old”, Dushanbe, 2023. Published in Russian and English;
- Book “30 years of IFAS (main documents)”, Dushanbe, 2023. Published in Russian.
- Book “Regional cooperation in Central Asia, (collection of articles dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea)”, Dushanbe, 2023. Published in Russian and English;
- Photo album in English and Russian languages “International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea: 30 years at the service of the peoples of Central Asia”, Dushanbe, 2023.

In addition, during this period, the Executive Committee of IFAS, its structural divisions and branches in the countries of the region regularly issued press releases and information booklets, published articles and reports in various national, regional and international publications. Numerous materials have been published on improving water management, ecological security, environmental protection, sustainable development, developing partnerships and strengthening cooperation in the region.





CONCLUSION

During Tajikistan's chairmanship in IFAS, the Fund managed to achieve important results in developing and strengthening regional and international cooperation, mitigating the consequences of the drying up of the Aral Sea and improving the socio-economic situation in the region, as well as enhancing the image of IFAS as an important regional institution.

Tajikistan paid special attention to strengthening cooperation between the founding states of IFAS. An important moment in this context was the meeting of the Council of Heads of the IFAS founding states held on 15 September 2023 in Dushanbe. The Dushanbe Statement adopted within the framework of the Summit noted the achieved results of IFAS, existing problems and challenges and threats, which the region is facing, as well as defined the main priorities and directions of the Fund's activities for the future. Regular IFAS Board meetings at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers of Central Asian countries, where the most urgent issues of the region were discussed and relevant decisions were made, also made a significant contribution to this process.

Tajikistan also paid great attention to raising awareness of the international community about the problems of the Aral Sea basin and the need to address them. As part of these activities, a number of regional and international events were held to draw the attention of international partners to solving the problems of the region and to demonstrate the cohesion and unity of the Central Asian States in overcoming the challenges and threats faced.

In addition, during this period it was possible to increase the attention of international organizations, financial institutions and donor countries to the Fund's activities and attract significant financial resources for

the implementation of regional projects and programs to improve the ecological and socio-economic situation in the region. In particular, additional financing of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (CAHMP) in the amount of US\$11.5 million was launched, as well as additional financing of the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for the Aral Sea Basin in amount of US\$19 million. In addition, Phase 2 of the CAHMP project is being developed with a total funding of approximately US\$50 million.

Tajikistan also made a significant contribution to the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS. During the chairmanship of Tajikistan in IFAS, 8 meetings of the Regional Working Group on improvement of the Fund were held, as a result of which significant progress was achieved in this direction.

Significant assistance and support in this process have been provided by international development partners. In this context, it is especially worth noting the support of the European Union, the World Bank, GIZ and USAID. The IFAS Executive Committee sincerely thanks all donors and development partners who have been providing all possible assistance to the countries of the region all these years!

In general, Tajikistan made every effort to make the Fund's work as effective as possible and to contribute to further development of the Fund's activity and increase its role in solving the Aral Sea basin problems.

The country intends to further actively participate in IFAS activities and make its worthy contribution to solving water, energy, ecological and socio-economic problems in the region.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 – OUTCOMES OF THE DUSHANBE SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF THE IFAS FOUNDING STATES

RESOLUTION
OF HEADS OF THE FOUNDING STATES OF IFAS ON THE OUTCOMES
OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN
IN THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA

The Heads of the Founding States of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea decided:

1. Take into consideration the report on the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea.

2. To approve the activities of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea and its President H.E. Emomali Rahmon in the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship in the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea.

Signed in Dushanbe on 15 September 2023, in one original copy in Russian.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan holds the original document and will send a certified copy to each of the founding states of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Republic of Uzbekistan

**RESOLUTION
OF HEADS OF THE FOUNDING STATES OF IFAS
ON THE ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND
FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA**

The Heads of the Founding States of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea decided:

1. To consider the report on activities to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.
2. To instruct the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea to take measures to accelerate the process of improving the organizational structure and contractual legal framework of the Fund.

Signed in Dushanbe on 15 September 2023, in one original copy in Russian.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan holds the original document and will send a certified copy to each of the founding states of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Republic of Uzbekistan

RESOLUTION
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF HEADS
OF THE FOUNDING STATES OF IFAS ON THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA

The Heads of the Founding States of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea decided:

To elect the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev the President of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea for a three-year term starting from 1 January 2024.

Signed in Dushanbe on 15 September 2023, in one original copy in Russian.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan holds the original document and will send a certified copy to each of the founding states of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Republic of Uzbekistan

DUSHANBE STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF FOUNDING STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA

On September 15, 2023, in Dushanbe, a meeting of the Council of Heads of Founding States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was held under the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan. The meeting was attended by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.K. Tokayev, President of the Republic of Tajikistan E. Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan S.G. Berdimuhamedow, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, and First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic A.A. Kasymaliev as an observer.

Based on the results of a substantive discussion on a wide range of issues related to regional cooperation aimed at further improving the ecological, socio-economic, water, and energy situation in the Aral Sea basin, which took place in a traditional atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust, and friendship, the Heads of Founding States of IFAS (hereinafter referred to as the Heads of States or Parties) declare the following:

The Heads of States note that water resources play a key role in Central Asia's sustainable development, and transboundary water cooperation is an essential component of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region. In this context, the Parties, expressing their readiness to prioritize water issues in national and regional strategies and development plans, reaffirm their commitment to further strengthening regional water cooperation.

The Parties recognize the important role of water resources in ensuring ecological, food and energy security, as well as achieving climate resilience and socio-economic development, taking into account an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to addressing these issues.

The Heads of States especially emphasize that IFAS is a key and unique regional institution for ensuring mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries of Central Asia in order to improve the ecological, socio-economic, water and energy situation in the Aral Sea basin. In this regard, every effort will be made to further improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS, as well as strengthening its potential and enhancing its image on the international arena.

The parties note the progress in improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS and advocate for the rapid completion of this process, taking into account the interests of all the founding states of the Fund.

The Heads of States express concern about the worsening Aral ecological disaster, which resulted in the formation of more than 5.5 million hectares of deserts, which have a significant negative impact on human health and the state of ecosystems throughout the region and beyond. The parties declare a firm commitment to jointly confront this crisis and its negative consequences, including by taking specific measures to comprehensively solve problems related to improving the socio-economic and ecological situation in the Aral Sea basin, especially in areas prone to ecological crisis.

The Heads of States note the positive results of large-scale forest reclamation work, conservation of ecosystems and wetlands, restoration of part of the Aral Sea and other measures to reduce the negative impact of the Aral crisis on the environment.

The Heads of States express concern about the deteriorating situation due to the impact of climate change, which has led to the accelerated melting of glaciers and to a growing number and intensity of natural phenomena, leading to an increased shortage of water resources. In this context, the Parties emphasize that only concerted actions by the states of the region, especially within the framework of an improved IFAS, will make it possible to take measures aimed at achieving climate resilience.

The parties emphasize the importance of expanding interaction and coordination in the field of the climate agenda, caring for natural resources, in particular the preservation of glaciers and water resources in general, building a low-carbon economy, and introducing resource-saving and "green" technologies.

The Heads of States note that ensuring universal and equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services for all people is critical to preventing water-related diseases. In this regard, the Parties encourage targeted investments in maintaining

such services and express their readiness to strengthen cooperation aimed at enhancing the health aspect of activities in these areas.

The parties recognize the important role of hydropower facilities on interstate watercourses to promote the integrated and rational use of water resources and resolve water and energy issues in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all countries in the region.

The Heads of States emphasize the importance of developing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial mechanism for water and energy cooperation in ensuring water, energy and food security in Central Asia.

The Parties note the need to take coordinated measures aimed at the widespread introduction of advanced information and communication technologies for water resources management, as well as innovative water-saving technologies for more efficient and rational use of water resources at the national and regional levels.

The Heads of States advocate the development and implementation of joint projects and programs with the attraction of external investments within the framework of the Action Program to assist the countries of the Aral Sea basin (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD-CA).

The Heads of States emphasize the importance of regional youth movements on protection of water resources and the environment in order to ensure the participation of the younger generation in overcoming modern challenges and threats.

The parties note the need to develop information bases and exchange information in the field of water management and ecology, including the introduction of new technologies at the national and regional levels.

The Heads of States express satisfaction with the adoption of resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on the Aral Sea basin and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and emphasize their commitment to further intensify interaction with the UN system.

The Heads of States note the importance of the adopted Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference, which confirms the readiness to work together to implement the commitments adopted within its framework.

The Parties express gratitude to international development partners and donor countries for their support in solving the problems of the Aral Sea basin and call on them for further interaction to assist the countries of the region in achieving sustainable development.

The Parties emphasize that the constructive negotiations held in Dushanbe in an atmosphere of openness and mutual understanding made a significant contribution to the further development of traditionally good neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation of the IFAS founding states in solving the problems of the Aral Sea basin.

The Heads of States highly appreciated the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in IFAS and noted the successful holding of events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Fund, as well as the fruitful results of the UN 2023 Water Conference held under the co-chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan on 22-24 March 2023 in New York.

The Parties express gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon for the hospitality and high level of organization of the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the Founding States of IFAS.

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

K.K. TOKAYEV

President of the Kyrgyz Republic

S.N. JAPAROV

President of the Republic of Tajikistan

E. RAHMON

President of Turkmenistan

S.G. BERDIMUHAMEDOW

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh.M. MIRZIYOYEV

Dushanbe, 15 September 2023

APPENDIX 2 –
RESOLUTIONS OF THE IFAS BOARD

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

29 June 2021

Dushanbe

**1. On the Work Plan of the Executive Committee of the International Fund
for Saving the Aral Sea for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship**

1. To approve the Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS should ensure the implementation of the updated Work Plan and regularly inform the Board of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

D. Gulmahmadzoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

29 June 2021

Dushanbe

**2. On the approval of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries
of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4)**

1. Confirm the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4).
2. The Executive Committee of IFAS in cooperation with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, to ensure the implementation of the ASBP-4.
3. The Executive Committee of IFAS to ensure monitoring of the implementation of ASBP-4 and regularly inform the Board of the Fund about the progress of its implementation.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

D.Gulmahmadzoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

29 June 2021

Dushanbe

**3. On the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure
and legal framework of IFAS**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the activities of the Working Group on improving the organizational structure and legal framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS and the relevant departments of the countries continue to work to intensify the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS, attract financial support and international consultants to facilitate its work.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

D.Gulmahmadzoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

29 June 2021

Dushanbe

4. On preparation for the 9th World Water Forum

1. Take note of the information from the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea about the preparatory process for events within the framework of the 9th World Water Forum.

2. To approve the proposal of the Executive Committee of IFAS to hold the Central Asian subregional preparatory conference for the 9th World Water Forum “Water Security for Peace and Development” in Dushanbe.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Interstate Coordination Water Commission and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, with the involvement of interested ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, ensure the successful holding of the Conference.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

D.Gulmahmadzoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION

of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

29 June 2021

Dushanbe

5. On the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS

At the next meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, consider the following issues:

- On the activities of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea for the reporting period;
- on the implementation of ASBP-4;
- on the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS;
- on the preparations to the 9th World Water Forum;
- on the implementation of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project;
- on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

D.Gulmahmadzoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

**1. On the activities of the Executive Committee of the International Fund
for saving the Aral Sea for the reporting period**

1. To consider the report on the activities of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea during the reporting period.

2. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea continues the activities to implement the Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship and regularly informs the IFAS Board on the progress of its implementation.

3. Interested ministries and departments, local executive authorities of the founding states of IFAS, and structural divisions of the Fund to provide assistance to the Executive Committee of IFAS for the successful organization and conduct of an expedition from the runoff formation zone to the Aral Sea (Syr Darya river basin) for young scientists and specialists.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

**2. On the progress of implementation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries
of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4)**

1. To consider the information on the progress of implementation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, ICWC and ICSD, in cooperation with interested ministries and departments of the founding states of the Fund, intensify joint activities, including with international partners, to ensure the implementation of ASBP-4 and regularly inform the Board of IFAS about the progress of its implementation.

3. In order to ensure monitoring of the implementation of ASBP-4, the structural subdivisions of IFAS and the relevant ministries and departments of the Founding States of the Fund will provide information to the Executive Committee of IFAS every six months.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

**3. On the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure
and legal framework of IFAS**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Coordination Water Commission, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development and the relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of the Fund to intensify the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

4. On preparation for the 9th World Water Forum
«Water Security for Peace and Development»

1. To consider the report from the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea about the preparatory process for the 9th World Water Forum.

2. To approve the Position paper of the countries of Central Asia on the priority themes of the 9th World Water Forum: “Central Asia for peace and development. Priorities, actions and tasks for the future.»

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Interstate Coordination Water Commission and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, with the involvement of interested ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, to ensure the participation of the Central Asian region at the 9th World Water Forum at a high level.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

**5. On the implementation of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project;
(CAHMP)**

1. To consider the report from the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on the progress of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project.

2. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the CAHMP Project, the Executive Committee of IFAS, as an exception, continues to implement the Project through the Corporate Fund “Regional Hydrology Center” until the completion of the implementation of the Financing Agreement between the Executive Committee of IFAS and the International Development Association from 3 December 2019.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Corporate Fund “Regional Center of Hydrology” and national hydrometeorological services, should intensify the implementation of activities provided for under the Project.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

6. On the participation of IFAS in the activities of the Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, “Catalyzing water action and partnership at the local, national, regional and global levels” 6-9 June 2022, Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan

1. To consider the information on the participation of IFAS in the activities of the Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, “Catalyzing water action and partnership at the local, national, regional and global levels” 6-9 June 2022, Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan.

2. Approve the proposals of EC IFAS on the organization of the Forum on Central Asia within the frame of the Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028.

3. The Executive Board of IFAS with the involvement of interested ministries and agencies of IFAS founder states, and development partners to organize a high-level Forum on Central Asia, as well as to ensure active participation of the Fund’s bodies in the Second High-Level International Conference on the International Decade of Action «Water for Sustainable Development», 2018-2028.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

**7. On approval of the “Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development
in Central Asia”**

1. Approve the “Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia” (REP4SD-CA).

2. Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD):

- together with the environmental and economic departments of the Central Asian countries, ensure the implementation of the REP4SD-CA;
- to carry out continuous monitoring of the process of implementation of the REP4SD-CA and inform the IFAS Board and Executive Committee of IFAS about the results.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS will assist the ICSD in attracting international partners in order to implement the REP4SD-CA.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION

of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

22 February 2022

Dushanbe

8. On the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS

At the next meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, consider the following issues:

- on the implementation of ASBP-4;
- on the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS;
- on the organization and holding of the events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS;
- on the outcomes of participation at the 9th World Water Forum and the 2nd International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028;
- on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

G. Bayjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION

of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

1. On the preparation of the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the Founding States of IFAS in Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan, 14-15 September 2023

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the preparation of the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the IFAS Founding States in Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan, on 14-15 September 2023.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS should prepare proposals for the draft Agenda for the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the IFAS Founding States and submit it for consideration to the Board.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, and relevant ministries and departments of the Central Asian countries provide assistance in the preparation and holding of the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the IFAS founding states.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

**2. On the organization and holding of events dedicated
to the 30th anniversary of IFAS**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on the organization and holding of events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS.

2. To approve the Plan for organizing and holding events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS.

3. To approve the members of the Organizing Committee for the organization and holding of events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS.

4. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, as well as with the involvement of relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, to ensure the implementation of the Plan for organizing and holding anniversary events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

**3. On the implementation of the Action Program to Assist the Countries
of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4)**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the implementation of ASBP-4.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, continue joint activities to ensure the implementation of ASBP-4 and regularly inform the Board of the Fund about the progress of its implementation.

3. In order to ensure monitoring of the implementation of ASBP-4, the structural subdivisions of IFAS and the relevant ministries and departments of the Founding States of the Fund provide information to the Executive Committee of IFAS every six months.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

**4. On the updated Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS
for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship**

1. To consider the updated Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship.
2. To approve the updated Work Plan of the Executive Committee of IFAS for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship (considering the extension of the chairmanship for a year).
3. The Executive Committee of IFAS should ensure the implementation of the updated Work Plan and regularly inform the Board of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

**5. On the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure
and legal framework of IFAS**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the activities of the Working Group on improving the organizational structure and legal framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

2. To approve the Report on progress achieved in the framework of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development and the relevant ministries and departments of the Founding States of the Fund, take measures to complete the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS as soon as possible.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

6. On preparations for the UN 2023 Water Conference in March in New York

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on preparations for the UN 2023 Water Conference on 22-24 March in New York, USA.

2. To approve the Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference.

3. Approve the proposal of the Executive Committee of IFAS to organize and hold a side event in New York on water cooperation in the Central Asian region.

4. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, with the involvement of the relevant ministries and departments of the Founding States of the Fund, to actively participate in the work of the Conference.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

**7. On the results of participation in the 9th World Water Forum
and the 2nd International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action
«Water for Sustainable Development», 2018-2028**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the results of participation in the 9th World Water Forum and the 2nd International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action «Water for Sustainable Development», 2018-2028.

2. To adopt the Outcome documents of the 9th World Water Forum and the 2nd International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action «Water for Sustainable Development», 2018-2028 in the implementation of the activities of the Executive Committee of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

8. On the introduction of modern equipment for accounting and monitoring of water resources in the basins of the Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers

1. Consider the views of the parties on supporting the introduction of modern equipment for accounting/recording and monitoring water resources in the Amudarya and Syrdarya river basins.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, together with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, to assist in attracting investments for the implementation of the project proposal «Improving the systems of accounting and monitoring of water resources in the Amudarya and Syrdarya river basins», included in the Action Program to Assist the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4).

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

28 November 2022

Dushanbe

9. On the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS

At the next meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, consider the following issues:

- on the preparation of the meeting of the Council of the Heads of the IFAS founding states in Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan, on 14-15 September 2023;
- on the implementation of the Plan of organizational measures for the preparation and celebration of the 30th anniversary of the IFAS, including the preparation of the International Conference;
- on the progress of ASBP-4 implementation;
- on the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS;
- on the activities of the Executive Committee of IFAS in 2022;
- on the outcomes of participation in the UN Conference on the Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Progress in Achieving the Goals of the International Decade for Action «Water for Sustainable Development», 2018-2028 (22-24 March 2023, New York);
- on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION

of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

1. On the preparation of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Founding States of IFAS in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, 14-15 September 2023

1. To consider the information of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on the progress of preparations for the Meeting of the Council of the Heads of the Founding States of IFAS in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, 14-15 September 2023.

2. Send the following proposals for the draft Agenda of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Founding States of IFAS to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Central Asian countries:

- on the results of the presidency of the Republic of Tajikistan in IFAS in the period of 2020-2023;
- on activities to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS;
- on the transition of the presidency of IFAS.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Coordination Water Commission, The Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development and relevant ministries and departments of the countries of Central Asia to assist in the preparation and holding of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Founding States of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

2. On the progress of implementation of the Plan for organizational events for the preparation and celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of IFAS

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the progress of the implementation of the Plan for organizational events for the preparation and celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of IFAS, including the preparation of the International Conference, as well as the organization and conduct of further anniversary events.

2. Award veterans and IFAS employees, as well as those who contributed to the development of regional cooperation, with the “IFAS 30 Anniversary” medal according to the attached list.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS together with the Interstate Coordination for Water Commission and Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development as well as with the involvement of relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, ensure the further implementation of the Plan for organizational events for the preparation and celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of IFAS, and provide a report at the next meeting of the IFAS Board.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

**3. On the progress of implementation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries
of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4)**

1. To consider the information on the progress of implementation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Coordination Water Commission, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, continue joint activities to ensure the implementation of ASBP-4 and regularly inform the Board of the Fund about the progress of its implementation.

3. In order to ensure monitoring of the implementation of ASBP-4, the structural subdivisions of IFAS and the relevant ministries and departments of the Founding States of the Fund will provide information to the Executive Committee of IFAS every six months.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

**4. On the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure
and legal framework of IFAS**

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Coordination Water Commission, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development and the relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of the Fund to take measures to complete the process of improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS as soon as possible.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

5. On the activities of the Executive Committee of IFAS in 2022

1. To consider the report on the activities of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea for 2022.

2. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea to take measures to implement the updated Work Plan of the Executive Committee IFAS for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

6. On the results of participation in the UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the implementation of the International Decade of Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (22-24 March 2023, New York, USA)

1. To consider the report of the Executive Committee of IFAS on the results of the participation in the UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (22-24 March 2023, New York, USA).

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Coordination Water Commission, the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and departments of the founding states of IFAS, to ensure the implementation of the Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S.Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

RESOLUTION
of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

5 June 2023

Dushanbe

7. On the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS

At the next meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, consider the following issues:

- on the outcomes of the meeting of the Heads of the IFAS Founding states held in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, 14-15 September 2023;
- on the process of the implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD-CA;
- on the activities of the Working Group to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS;
- on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of IFAS.

Republic of Kazakhstan

R. Sklyar

Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

A. Yazmyradov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

APPENDIX 3 –
REPORT ON PROGRESS ACHIEVED
IN IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF IFAS

REPORT

on progress achieved in improving the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS

PREREQUISITES

By the resolution of the IFAS Board of 30 January 2018, the Work Plan of the IFAS Executive Committee was approved, on the basis of which a Working Group was created to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS (WG). During the chairmanship of Turkmenistan (2017-2019), three meetings of the Working Group were held, as a result of which it was decided to carry out work in the following five stages:

- (i) Objectives of IFAS, taking into account existing agreements, new realities and requirements of the founding states;
- (ii) Identification of problems in the performance of functions and tasks by structural divisions of IFAS;
- (iii) Preparation of recommendations for improving the organizational structure of IFAS;
- (iv) Preparation of recommendations for improving financial support for the activities of the organizational structure of IFAS management;
- (v) Preparation of proposals for improving the legal framework in order to create an effective and sustainable institutional mechanism for cooperation.

In accordance with the Resolution of the Heads of the Central Asian states on 29 November 2019, the chairmanship in IFAS was transferred to the Republic of Tajikistan for the period from 2020 to 2022. The WG process was continued and to date eight meetings have been held in Dushanbe, Almaty and Tashkent.

STAGE 1

During Stage 1 of the IFAS WG improvement process, the geographical scope, areas of cooperation, as well as the main goal, main and general tasks, and subtasks were agreed upon.

- The geographical scope of IFAS is the Aral Sea basin.
- Four areas of cooperation: water resources, energy, environment, socio-economic development.
- Main goal: “Strengthening and developing regional cooperation in the Aral Sea basin in the water, energy, environmental and socio-economic spheres for the sustainable development of the countries of the basin.”

For each individual area, a main task and subtasks are formulated, which are based on existing agreements and mandates, and also contribute to their development to solve new regional problems, taking into account modern realities, climate change and the development of comprehensive and inclusive cooperation in the region. In addition, the WG formulated and agreed upon the general objectives of IFAS.

WATER RESOURCES

The main task	Ensuring the integrated and rational use and protection of water resources from interstate sources.
Subtask 1.	Use the water resources of the Aral Sea basin in a sustainable and equitable manner to ensure prosperity and sustainable development.
Subtask 2.	Sustainable provision of sanitary releases and water supply to the Aral Sea in volumes stipulated by the schemes of integrated use and protection of water resources in the Syrdarya and Amudarya river basins depending on actual water availability and climatic conditions.

Subtask 3.	Development, coordination and implementation of joint approaches and measures for the equitable distribution, integrated and rational use and protection of water resources from interstate sources.
Subtask 4.	Increasing the efficiency of water use and operation of water infrastructure, including the introduction of water-saving technologies, the use of economic instruments and other advanced methods and practices.
Subtask 5.	Cooperation and exchange of information on early warning and risk reduction of water-related natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.
Subtask 6.	Assistance in promoting issues of creating mechanisms for joint construction and operation of water and energy facilities of interstate importance.
Subtask 7.	Ensuring monitoring of compliance with agreements and other arrangements on the distribution and use of water resources.
Subtask 8.	Promoting information exchange, capacity building, stakeholder participation, joint research and coordinated planning.
Subtask 9.	Promoting the safety of hydraulic structures and dams.
Subtask 10.	Development of mechanisms for mutually beneficial regional cooperation on the integrated use of water and energy resources.

ENERGY

The main task	Coordination and promotion of joint actions of the founding states in the field of energy to ensure sustainable and reliable energy supply to the economy and population of the founding states, including through renewable energy sources.
Subtask 1.	Ensuring regional energy dialogue.
Subtask 2.	Assistance in the development and implementation of joint programs and projects in the energy sector.
Subtask 3.	Assistance in attracting financial resources for the implementation of joint water and energy programs and projects aimed at developing “green” energy.
Subtask 4.	Preparation of proposals on creating favorable conditions for joint work in the energy sector.

ECOLOGY/ENVIRONMENT

The main task	Development and implementation regional environmental policy agreed upon by the founding states, and intensification of joint actions in the field of environmental protection, climate change and sustainable development in general.
Subtask 1.	Maintaining adequate water quality in rivers and reservoirs based on agreed criteria.
Subtask 2.	Coordination of joint actions to stabilise and possibly restore the balance of disturbed ecosystems in the region, including in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya deltas and adjacent areas of dried seabed.
Subtask 3.	Taking joint action to monitor, protect and preserve glaciers and headwater ecosystems, including mitigating the negative impacts of climate change.
Subtask 4.	Development, coordination and implementation of interstate and regional programs and projects in the field of environmental protection, ecological safety and information, climate change and sustainable development.
Subtask 5.	Coordinating the policies of member states in the field of environmental protection, as well as assisting them in fulfilling their obligations under international environmental agreements.
Subtask 6.	Promoting a common regional position of member states at global ecological forums.
Subtask 7.	Development and implementation of joint measures in the field of environmental protection, including combating desertification, conservation and restoration of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its consequences.
Subtask 8.	Promoting the development of an interstate environmental monitoring system for the collection, assessment, forecasting and exchange of ecological information.

Subtask 9.	Development of practical measures to preserve forests and increase the area of forest plantations.
Subtask 10.	Preparation of recommendations for the harmonization of regulations of the Member States in the field of environmental protection and combating climate change, as well as the development of common methodological approaches in the field of environmental management.
Subtask 11.	Adoption of joint measures by member states to prevent and reduce the risks of natural disasters, as well as eliminate their consequences.
Subtask 12.	Facilitate the reclamation of tailings management facilities, particularly those located in areas potentially exposed to disaster risks.
Subtask 13.	Assistance in promoting waste management measures.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The main task	Coordination of joint actions of the founding states aimed at improving the socio-economic living conditions of the population of the Aral Sea basin.
Subtask 1.	Taking measures to improve the living conditions of the population of the Aral Sea basin, including sanitary and medical-biological conditions, and providing safe drinking water.
Subtask 2.	Creating favorable conditions for investment projects aimed at improving the socio-economic situation in the member states.
Subtask 3.	Expanding cooperation in the fields of education, health, tourism, social protection and culture related to the goals of the organization.
Subtask 4.	Promoting the implementation of green economy principles.
Subtask 5.	Promoting the deepening of diverse economic cooperation and the development of joint programs and projects in the socio-economic sphere.

GENERAL TASKS OF IFAS

Task 1.	Assistance in the development and implementation of coordinated regional policies in the areas of integrated and rational use and protection of water resources, energy, environment and socio-economic development.
Task 2.	Interaction with national and international partners and civil society on issues within the competence of the organization to achieve sustainable development.
Task 3.	Attracting financial resources and other material and technical resources to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.
Task 4.	Promote research programs, exchange of knowledge and innovation, and capacity building.
Task 5.	Providing an information and analytical basis for cooperation.
Task 6	Development, implementation and monitoring of regional projects and programs in the areas of integrated and rational use and protection of water resources, energy, environment and socio-economic development.
Task 7.	Coordination and monitoring of the implementation of regional projects and programs financed by development partners in the region in areas within the competence of the organization.

STAGE 2

As part of Stage 2, bilateral discussions were studied, analyzed and held to identify problems related to the performance of functions and solution of tasks by the structural divisions of IFAS. This allowed us to assess how the current institutional structure of IFAS and its substructures are fit for purpose, and where changes need to be made to the existing mandate to take into account the new tasks/sub-tasks agreed under Stage 1.

Many of the required functions are broadly included in the existing mandate of IFAS and its substructures. However, their effective implementation requires clarification of functions and agreement on mandates, appropriate budgets, staffing and capacity development. To address issues requiring clearer organizational mandates, the following proposals have been made within each area agreed in Stage 1:

WATER RESOURCES

- Integrate the agreed tasks/subtasks into existing substructures - in particular, ICWC, SIC ICWC and BWO - and outline their responsibilities and accountability in the relevant regulatory documents.
- Consider which tasks are best entrusted to national structures, while IFAS will play a coordinating role (for example, measures to improve water use efficiency, disaster risk management, safety of hydraulic infrastructure - subtasks 4, 5, 9).
- Pay special attention to the consideration of water and energy issues and the implementation of coordination between these two areas (for example, within the framework of coordination and joint construction and operation of water and energy facilities of interstate importance).

ENERGY¹

- Reflect the agreed core tasks and sub-tasks into appropriate mandates by considering the most appropriate mechanism.

ECOLOGY

- Strengthen mechanisms to mitigate the effects of climate change and its adaptation (main goal, subtasks 3, 4, 7 and 10).
- Coordinate actions to restore common ecosystems, especially in the areas of the Amudarya and Syrdarya river deltas (subtask 2).
- Strengthen coordination of actions to protect the ecosystems of upper watersheds and glaciers (subtask 3).
- Provide measures to develop a unified regional position at global ecological forums (subtask 6).
- Develop a set of measures to protect forests (subtask 9).
- Provide for joint measures to prevent, reduce the risks of natural disasters and catastrophes and eliminate their consequences (subtask 11).
- Assist in the reclamation of tailings dumps (subtask 12).
- Coordinate waste management activities (subtask 13).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES²

Reflect the agreed main tasks and sub-tasks in the relevant mandates by considering the most appropriate mechanism (for example, within the framework of cooperation in the field of education, health, tourism, social protection, culture (subtask 3) and promoting the implementation of the principles of a green economy (subtask 4)).

¹ This direction is a new area for IFAS (with the exception of the mandate of the ICWC for coordination with the Coordination Dispatch Center "Energy" (Tashkent) in accordance with the Regulations of 2008).

² The general mandate of IFAS in the socio-economic sphere is part of the Kyzylorda Agreement of 1993. In practice, it is only very partially covered by the ICSD and needs stronger institutional mandates and frameworks.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Include intersectoral coordination in the mandate of the Executive Committee of IFAS, as well as the ICWC, ICSD (and possible new organizations) (task 1).
- Include coordination with stakeholders in the mandate of the Executive Committee of IFAS (task 2).
- Expand the capacity and funding of existing SICs to cover issues within the areas of energy and socio-economic development (task 4).
- Strengthen the existing joint information database and analytical base of the SIC (budget, joint database); it was proposed to create a single integrated database covering data related to all four areas, which could be managed by the Executive Committee of IFAS (task 5).
- Strengthen mechanisms for the development, implementation and monitoring of regional projects within the existing mandate of the Executive Committee of IFAS (task 6).

In addition to specific institutional needs in accordance with the agreed goal and tasks/sub-tasks, there are a number of other issues that need to be addressed during the next stages of improving the institutional structure and legal framework of IFAS:

- Formation of an independent budget; financial solutions for IFAS institutions.
- Permanent and balanced location of units in the founding states and their statuses; the possibility of attracting international personnel; rotation of leadership positions in substructures.
- Coordination with Afghanistan and/or the possibility of including it in dialogue with IFAS in the future.
- An updated and improved legal framework that eliminates duplication of mandates between IFAS institutions.

STAGE 3

The agreed new goal and tasks/sub-tasks include certain areas and functions that have not hitherto been included in the IFAS mandate, which will require adaptation and improvement of the institutional structure. International experts presented options for the institutional structure, and having considered them, delegations from all 5 countries presented their vision of options for an improved institutional structure of IFAS. During further discussions, the delegations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan determined that the future institutional structure would retain the Council of Heads of States and the Board at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers. It is proposed to abolish the institution of the presidency and the Audit Commission and replace the functions of the latest with independent financial audits.

Regarding the Executive Committee the position on its preservation and strengthening, as well as on the permanent location of the Executive Committee office (confirmation from Turkmenistan is required) with rotation of chairmanship and management was agreed. The staff should be internationalized (consisting of citizens of all IFAS founding states, except for technical staff). Additionally, the Executive Committee will be entrusted with the functions of the Secretariat of all commissions. Agreement was also reached on the following points:

- The commissions are subordinate to the IFAS Board, but at the same time coordinate their activities through the Executive Committee;
- The executive bodies of the commissions should remain subordinate to the commissions themselves.

In addition, it was proposed to create a coordination platform for interaction with donors, but not include it in the future institutional structure of IFAS.

Below is a diagram of a possible organizational structure based on the agreements reached between the delegations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan (Figure 1).

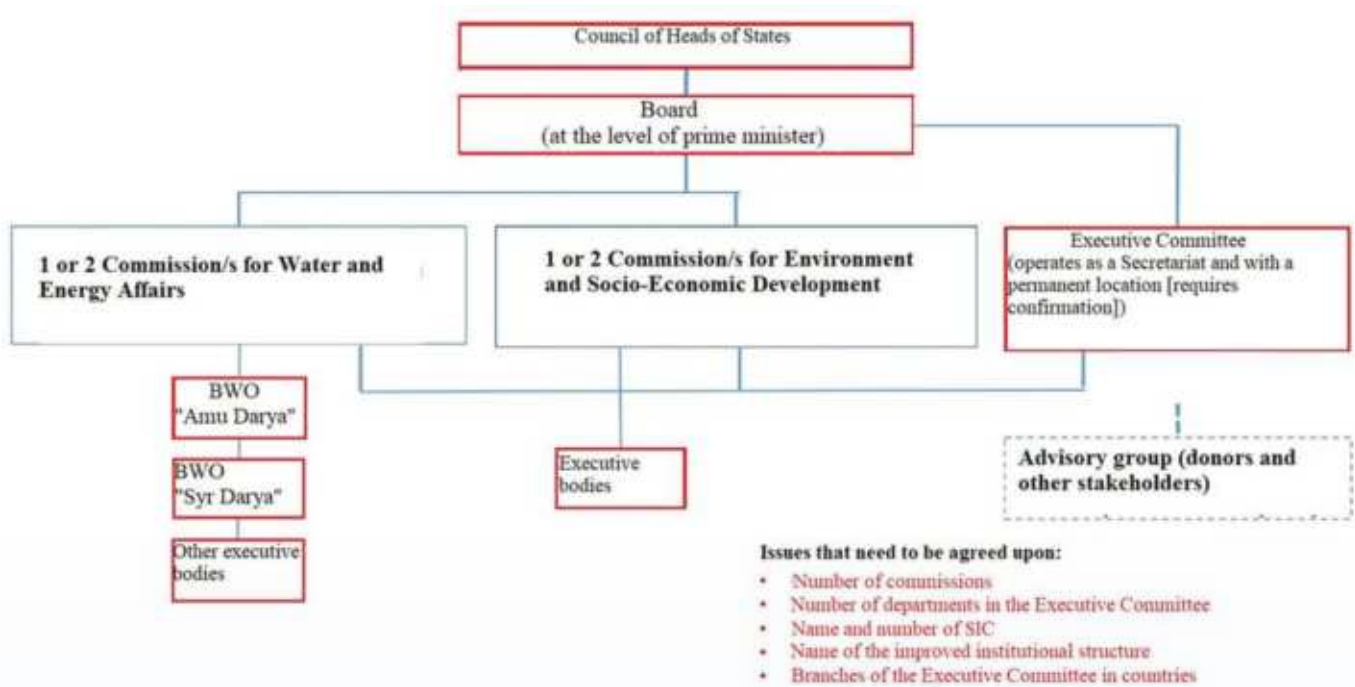


Figure 1. Possible organizational structure based on agreements reached

As a result of the discussions, the position of the delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic could not be integrated into a possible organizational structure that reflects the convergence of the positions of other parties. Further discussion on the issue of integration and rapprochement of countries' positions will be continued during subsequent meetings of the Working Group. Work on Stage 3 is ongoing.

STAGE 4

To develop recommendations for improving the financing mechanisms and sustainability of the organizational structure of IFAS management and to initiate discussions within the framework of Stage 4, at the request of the WG, an international group of experts provided general initial information on international practices in the financing of joint mechanisms/basin water management organizations and mapping the initial data of financial flows of IFAS institutions.

Additional issues that will also be analyzed during the Stage 4 discussions include: (i) on the funding structure of the Senegal River Basin Development Organization (as an example); (II) a more detailed analysis, presenting a holistic picture of the historical and current sources of funding for IFAS institutions (internal and external, taking into account funding conditions),

as well as taking into account the budget allocated for the implementation of core functions; (III) conduct an analysis of the comparability of wage structures in the founding states ; (IV) assessment of the funding required for an improved IFAS structure (within the framework of the decisions under consideration for Stage 3).

SUGGESTED FURTHER PROCESS

Based on the progress achieved in improving IFAS, further actions are proposed:

- Continuing the discussion on Stage 3 and agreeing on issues/items on which there are currently discrepancies in the institutional structure of the improved IFAS;
- As part of Stage 4, development and approval of proposals to improve financial support for the activities of the organizational structure of IFAS management;
- As part of Stage 5, preparation of proposals to improve the legal framework in order to create an effective and sustainable institutional mechanism for cooperation.

APPENDIX 4 –
JOINT STATEMENT
OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES
AT THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE

JOINT STATEMENT of the Central Asian states at the UN 2023 Water Conference (22-24 March 2023, New York, United Nations)

The comprehensive rapprochement of the Central Asian states is due to the dictates of time and fully meets the fundamental interests of the fraternal peoples. Ensuring sustainable development, stability and security of the region is a common task that makes us responsible to future generations.

Water resources play a key role in achieving sustainable development in Central Asia, and transboundary water cooperation is an essential component in ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Effectively established water cooperation can become a catalyst for development, and the lack of such cooperation can cause serious risks and costs that can adversely affect the overall economic and social situation.

Meanwhile, new challenges, such as the impact of climate change, glaciers shrinking in volume and area, financial and economic crises of recent years, emerging epidemiological diseases, in particular COVID-19, require closer cooperation from the Central Asian countries to reliably provide water to the population, various sectors of economy and natural objects. Along with this, significant population growth is expected, which will lead to an increase in water demand by 1% annually and will be about 30% by 2050, from now.

A particular concern is the ecological catastrophe of the drying up of the Aral Sea, which resulted in the formation of 5.5 million hectares of deserts that have a negative impact on human health and the state of ecosystems throughout the region.

These challenges, coupled with the growing demand for water, energy and food resources, require decisive action to be taken to ensure the rational use of the water resources of the Aral Sea Basin.

The countries of Central Asia have always adhered to the position of developing comprehensive cooperation on water and energy issues in the region on the principles of good neighborhood, mutual respect, support and mutual consideration of the interests of all parties.

The UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (hereinafter referred to

as the UN 2023 Water Conference) is the second UN conference dedicated to water resources, after the conference in Mar del Plata in 1977 and provides a unique opportunity to catalyze and accelerate actions towards achieving SDG6 and other internationally agreed water-related goals and targets.

Central Asia uses the platform of the UN 2023 Water Conference to inform the world community about the existing problems in the region and attract attention and resources to solve them, as well as to demonstrate the solidarity of the countries of the region on issues related to water resources, the readiness to jointly combat today's and future challenges, including through appropriate commitments at the national and regional levels.

In this regard, the Parties declare the following:

1. Water is fundamental to all aspects of life and the UN 2023 Water Conference provides a unique opportunity to take further concerted actions to address water issues at all levels.
2. Countries of Central Asia recognize the importance and actuality of the Conference for addressing water-related issues and express their willingness to contribute to its success.
3. The states of the region recognize that urgent and effective actions are needed to achieve SDG 6 and other internationally agreed water goals and therefore express their willingness to make the following commitments at the regional and national levels as a contribution to the outcome of the Conference - Water Action Agenda:
 - 3.1. Regional level:
 - 3.1.1. Cooperation, especially in the field of water resources, is a key factor in solving existing problems and challenges, as well as ensuring peace, stability and development in the region, and therefore the countries of Central Asia reaffirm their commitment to further strengthening regional cooperation to achieve sustainable development.
 - 3.1.2. Regional institutions are important tools for

mutually beneficial cooperation, and in this regard, the parties will make every effort to strengthen their potential. In this context, the parties are committed to accelerating the improvement of the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS, taking into account the interests of all countries in the region.

3.1.3. The implementation of joint projects is an important component of solving water problems and strengthening confidence-building measures, in connection with which the countries of the region express their readiness to develop and implement joint projects and programs, attract foreign investment in the leading sectors of the economies of the states of the region, including for the implementation of the Program of Action for assistance to the countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD-CA).

3.1.4. The Parties emphasize the importance of expanding interaction and coordination in the field of the climate agenda, careful attitude to natural resources, conservation of glaciers and water resources in general, building a low-carbon economy, introducing resource-saving and «green» technologies, including the development of renewable energy sources, and express their readiness for joint activities in these directions.

3.1.5. The countries of the region are committed to jointly resist the Aral Sea crisis and its negative consequences, as well as to take specific measures to comprehensively address the problems associated with improving the socio-economic and environmental situation in the Aral Sea basin, especially in areas prone to the ecological crisis.

3.2. National level:

3.2.1. The countries of the region will continue joint actions on the integrated management and rational use of water resources and environmental protection in the Aral Sea basin.

3.2.2. The countries of the region will intensify work on the introduction of water-resource-saving and innovative technologies.

3.2.3. The parties will continue activities for the afforestation of territories, including in the Aral Sea zone.

3.2.4. The Parties consider water diplomacy as a political and diplomatic form of multilateral cooperation.

4. The countries of Central Asia recognize the importance of constant interaction and support of development partners to strengthen cooperation in ensuring the sustainable development of the region and the efforts of regional institutions to involve partners on a systematic basis. The readiness of development partners to continue active and constructive joint work with national governments on this common agenda to improve the living conditions of the population of the region is welcomed.

5. The Parties emphasize that 2023 is also important for the region in connection with the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea - the main regional institution that ensures mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of water resources and environmental protection. Based on this, the states of the region intend to widely use this event in order to demonstrate the unity of the region in managing water resources and solving existing water problems and conclude the results of the Fund's activities for this period within the framework of the IFAS Summit in September 2023 in Dushanbe.

6. The states of Central Asia are committed to mutual understanding and comprehensive mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of water resources and express their readiness to work together to implement the commitments made within the framework of the UN 2023 Water Conference at all levels.

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