



Component 2 – Strengthening transboundary river basin management

This component will focus especially on the smaller rivers which are particularly suited to applying the basic principles of river basin management. Measures include drawing up inventories and management plans, making proposals in the field of dam safety and the environmental impacts of dams, and supporting the establishment of monitoring systems and data exchange. GTZ is working in close consultation with the European Commission, which is highly active in this field.

Component 3 – Implementing fast-track projects

The fast-track projects will serve primarily to implement specific measures at national level that showcase in the most tangible manner the opportunities presented by improved water use. These range from setting up modern irrigation systems to constructing smaller hydropower facilities.

Close coordination with the other projects under way as a part of the Berlin Process is pivotal to the programme. Those activities range from establishing a regional research network for the water sector (implemented by the German Research Centre for Geosciences Potsdam and the German Aerospace Center) to organising visits by delegations from Central Asia. This integration delivers synergies and greatly increases the impact of the measures.

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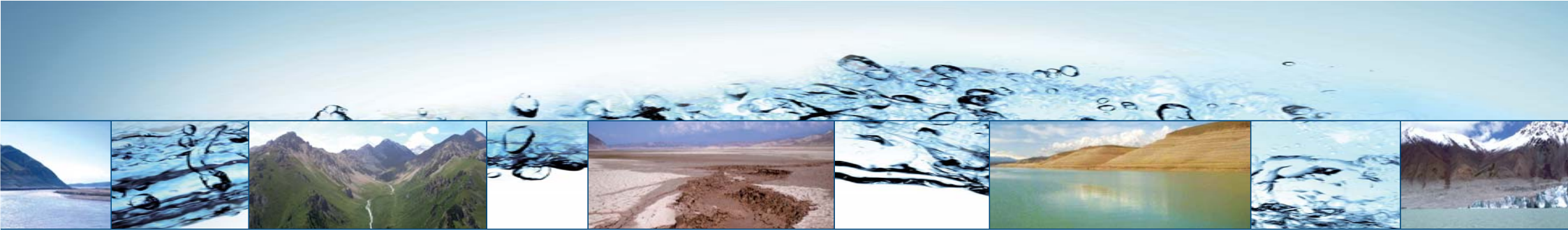
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A Source of Peace – Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia



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Water in Central Asia – a scarce resource

Water scarcity is a global issue, but affects Central Asia particularly severely. In this region, global climate change is combining with chronic over-exploitation of available reserves to devastating effect. Yet water in Central Asia is not only scarce, it is also distributed and utilised unevenly. In the absence of alternatives, the water-rich states on the upper reaches of the major rivers – the Syr Darya and Amu Darya – deploy the resource mainly for energy production in winter (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan), while the downstream states (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) mainly use the water to irrigate cropland in summer. Inappropriate management of water resources by users, such as wastage of water and inefficient irrigation due to obsolete irrigation facilities, exacerbates the situation particularly. The environmental disaster of the Aral Sea, which is essentially an outcome of misguided irrigation policy, is emblematic of the precarious water situation in the region.

Scarce resources, inappropriate management and disparate interests – all these factors cause water distribution in Central Asia to harbour a major potential for conflict. Effective water management, in contrast, is a source of stability and security and is thus the key to sustainable economic development.

The Berlin Process

On 1 April 2008, the German Federal Foreign Minister announced the launch of a water initiative for Central Asia (the 'Berlin Process') at the Berlin water conference 'Water Unites'. The initiative is an offer by the German Federal Government to the countries of Central Asia to support them in water management and to make water a subject of intensified transboundary cooperation. The primary goal is to thereby set in train a process of political rapprochement in Central Asia that leads to closer cooperation in the use of the scarce water resources and may result in joint water and energy management in the long term.



The German Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier opens the conference 'Water Unites'

The water initiative for Central Asia has four pillars:

1. Promoting transboundary water management
2. Expanding scientific knowledge for transboundary water management
3. Networking water experts in Germany, the EU and Central Asia
4. Establishing a course in water management at the German-Kazakh University in Almaty, Kazakhstan

The Berlin Process is open to all players. It is further conceived of as an integral component of the EU strategy for a new partnership with Central Asia which was adopted during the German EU presidency in June 2007.

The most extensive element of the Berlin Process is the Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme, which Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ – German Technical Cooperation) is carrying out on behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office. Under that programme, measures will be implemented over the period from 2009 to 2011 that not only optimise cooperation in the Central Asian water sector, but also improve the lives of people in the region. GTZ is collaborating closely to that end with national partners such as the Central Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences (CAIAG) and international partners such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Funding for the programme totals €10 million. If it proves successful, further replenishment of these funds is conceivable.

Strengthening cooperation – showcasing solutions

On behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office, GTZ has laid the groundwork for the programme in each of the five Central Asian states and has developed a programme strategy together with local partner organisations. The strategy has three components:

Component 1 – Fostering regional institutional cooperation

Although there are already institutions in Central Asia that regulate matters of water distribution, such as the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) or the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), their work is hampered by their weak position in the political system. No universally recognised and implemented guidelines are in place for the water sector. The programme tackles precisely this issue: not only are the water sector institutions to be strengthened, for instance by defining more clearly their mandate and mission, but plans of action and codes of conduct will also be produced. This component is being implemented in close cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

