



United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PROJECT REPORT

Development of cooperation on the Chu and Talas Rivers (Chu – Talas II)



1. INTRODUCTION

The project “Developing cooperation on the Chu and Talas Rivers” (Chu-Talas II) was implemented by OSCE and UNECE over the period 2008-2011. It is a follow-up of the project “Supporting the establishment of the Commission on the Chu and Talas Rivers between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan” (Chu-Talas I). Both projects have provided assistance to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in implementing their bilateral Agreement of 21 January 2000 on the joint maintenance of water facilities on the Chu and Talas Rivers used for sharing water between the two countries.

The Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on the Use of Water Management Facilities of Intergovernmental Status on the Chu and Talas Rivers (Chu Talas Water Commission) has been successfully operating and maintaining these facilities in order to allocate, in accordance with the agreed water sharing schedule, water resources of these rivers since it was established in 2006 with the support of the international community, including the United Nations and OSCE.

At the 4th meeting of the Chu Talas Water Commission (CTWC) in September 2007, the international support was noted with gratitude and that a continued support by international organisations would be of great value. OSCE and UNECE were requested to continue their support to the CTWC in the following areas:

- Improvement of the legal basis of the Commission as well as the broadening of its mandate;
- Improvement of the methods for sharing the costs of the operation and maintenance of the facilities of interstate use;
- Installation of water measuring devices at the facilities of interstate use and development of unified methodologies for water flow measuring;
- Assessment of the interdependence between surface and ground waters in the Chu River basin;
- Improvement of information dissemination about the work of the CTWC to the public.

This provided the basis for developing and implementing the Chu – Talas II project. The project funding – 100,000 Euros - was provided by the Government of Finland. Additional in-kind contributions were made by OSCE as well as UNECE.

2. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

The project has achieved its objectives and contributed substantially to the further development of the cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers. The political events in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 have only marginally affected project implementation.

Three project meetings were held in conjunction with the 7th, 8th and 9th sessions of the CTWC, held on 6-7 February 2009, 6-7 October 2009 in Bishkek, and 7-8 April 2010 in Taraz, Kazakhstan. The project results were presented at the International Conference devoted to the 10th anniversary of the Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on the Use of Water Management Facilities of Intergovernmental Status on the Chu and Talas Rivers of 21 January 2000 (23-24 May 2011, Bishkek).



With regard to the individual project objectives, the achievements are the following:

Objective 1: Broadened cooperation on the protection and use of the transboundary water resources in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers.

The achievements include:

1. Draft amendments in the 2000 Agreement proposing the inclusion of additional water facilities in the Agreement were prepared and adopted at the 8th CTWC session:
 - Kozh canal with waterworks on the Talas River;
 - Karataki canal with waterworks on the Kurkureusu River;
 - Tomentanga canal with waterworks on the Kurkureusu River;
 - Akmolda canal.

The 9th CTWC session decided to propose further amendments to the Agreement on the financing of the Secretariat, easier access across the border and the possibility of tax and customs tariff exemption in connection with work on facilities of inter-state use. The draft Protocol to the 2000 Agreement containing proposed amendments has been submitted to the respective authorities in each country for approval.

2. Draft changes and additions to the CTWC Statute corresponding to the proposed amendments in the 2000 agreement, were prepared .
3. The following documents were prepared and discussed at the 9th CTWC session:
 - An information note on the establishment of a new commission between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with a broader mandate on sustainable development in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers (Annex 2). The negotiations of a new agreement on the two basins broadening the scope of cooperation with the view to replace the existing 2000 Agreement were discussed. A new basin-wide agreement broadening the scope of cooperation would ensure continued implementation of the 2000 Agreement while extending it to IWRM issues such as stakeholder involvement.
 - An organisational chart for the new proposed commission for the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers.
 - A report on the possibility of setting up a basin water management organization (BVO) as an operational arm of the proposed commission.

Objective 2: Establishment of conditions for stakeholder involvement in transboundary water management in the river basins.

The achievements include:

1. Draft Statute of the proposed international (trans-boundary) basin council for the Chu and Talas Rivers prepared and discussed at the 9th CTWC session;
2. A review, by national experts from both countries, of possible functions of the proposed international basin council for the Chu and Talas Rivers

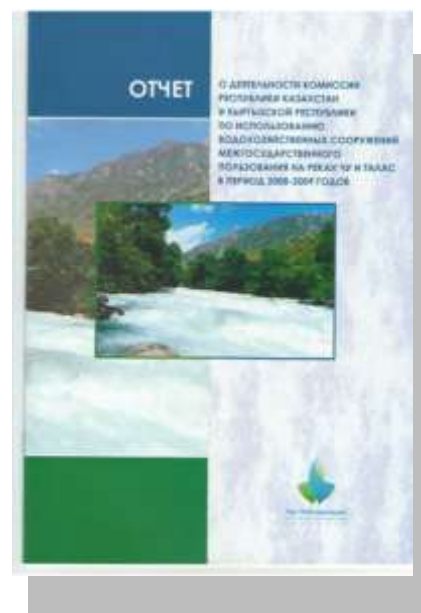
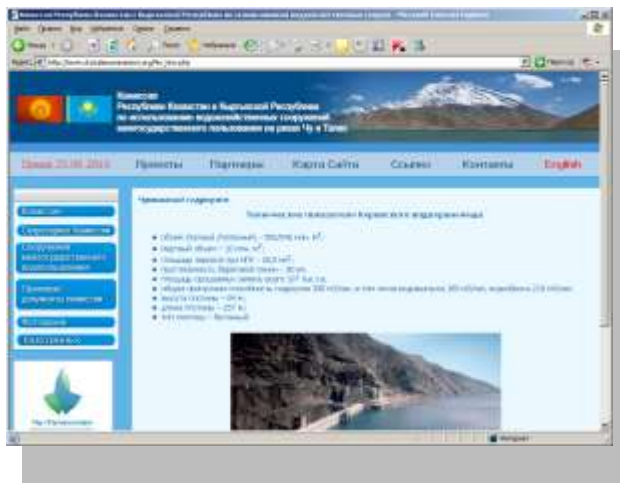
The proposed international basin council for the Chu and Talas Rivers is expected to be a consultative and advisory body for the proposed joint commission on sustainable development in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers. The council would be mandated to develop and submit recommendations for consideration by the joint commission.

The council would have an important role of involving the public, NGOs, and water users in the management decision making process on matters pertaining to the use and protection of the water resources in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers. The establishment of the basin council is an important component in introducing integrated water resources management.

Objective 3: Improved transparency and information exchange on the situation in the river basins and its management.

The achievements include:

1. A new web-page was established with the support of the project on www.chutalascommission.org. The content of the web-page in Russian and English is supported by the CTWC Secretariat and is updated with information about CTWC activities.



The official website provides information about the CTWC, contains its main legal documents, minutes of the CTWC sessions and the meetings of its Secretariat, as well as other material. The material is available in Russian and English that contributes to an increased number of users of this resource and provides an opportunity for a wider dissemination of knowledge and awareness about the work of the CTWC.

2. The Report on the activities of the CTWC for the period 2008 – 2009 was drafted and adopted at the 9th CTWC session and has been published in Russian and English with the support of the project.

Objective 4: Specific guidelines for the co-funding for maintenance, operation and reconstruction for each water-sharing facility of intergovernmental status agreed on by both countries.

The achievements include:

1. Proposals to improve cost sharing for covering expenditures for operation and maintenance of the water facilities of interstate use were prepared based on contributions by national experts from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
2. Improved methodologies for the identification of operation, maintenance and repair works were developed and provided for use. These were presented and approved at the 9th CTWC session.
3. Updated recommendations for estimating the costs of such works and sharing them were also presented and approved at the 9th CTWC session.

Objective 5: Uniform methodology for volumetric measurement of in-flow and out-flow for interstate water sharing.

The achievements include:

1. Draft technical normative documents were developed and presented at the 9th CTWC session including:
 - Technical norms for metrological verification of hydrological posts in open water channels' .
 - Three methodologies for measuring water flow in open water channels .
2. The technical norms for verification of hydrological posts were approved by the Centre of Standardisation and Metrology of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyz Standard) as national standard of the Kyrgyz Republic and have entered into force.
3. The three developed methodologies were approved and attested by Kyrgyz Standard for water flow measuring at hydrological posts in open water channels.

The development of uniform methodologies that meet the requirements of national metrological standards will help remove differences connected with the current use of different normative documents for water flow measurement and will facilitate water allocation between the two countries. In case of approval of these methodologies in Kazakhstan, this will represent the first example of a jointly accepted standard for water flow measurement in the region.

Objective 6: Improved and transparent measurement of water flow in the Chu river and associated canals made available to both countries.

The achievements include:

1. An information and measurement system for the Kegety headworks of the Eastern Big Chu Canal (EBCC), one of the interstate water facilities, was developed.
2. Five water level meters were manufactured and installed at the Kegety headworks.
3. Software for the system was developed.
4. The water metering devices and the dispatch centre were commissioned.
5. Test runs of the system were carried out.
6. The system users were trained.



The information and measuring system was handed over in July 2010 to the operating organisation, the Chu Basin Water Department of the State Water and Melioration Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The installed system improves water accounting and facilitates water allocation between the countries. Furthermore, reliability and quality of the generated information was improved, thus, helping to remove any disagreements regarding water allocation as well as simplifying the process of agreed water allocation and maintenance payments.

Objective 7: An improved understanding of the conditions for the formation and flow of transboundary groundwater in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers.

The achievements include:

1. The report “Study of the interrelation between the river Chu and groundwater in the Tokmak city region as a basis for the management of water resources” was produced and consequently presented and discussed at the 9th CTWC session.
2. The report ‘Hydrogeological assessment of the groundwater inflow to the Chu River from Kazakhstan in the state border area’ was prepared .

The reports contribute to a better understanding of the complex interrelation between surface water and groundwater in the Chu River basin with some explanation provided for changes in surface water flow in the mainstream of the Chu River in the area near Tokmak town. Further studies are needed (a

project proposal for a follow-up project is available) in order to give a basis for the decision making for interstate allocation of water resources in the basin.

3. BEYOND THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Development of safety criteria for the Kirov dam.

Kazakhstan has raised concerns about the safety of the Kirov dam situated on the Talas River on Kyrgyz territory upstream of the major Kazak city of Taraz. The two countries requested UNECE to support and facilitate this work.

The achievements include:

1. A bilateral Working Group examined the Kirov dam and prepared a joint assessment of its safety.
2. Safety criteria of the hydrotechnical installations of the Kirov dam was reviewed and complemented to develop the operational control of the level of safety and status of the dam.
3. Preparation of the report “Elaboration of safety criteria of the Kirov dam” .

Elaboration of safety criteria for the assessment of status and risk levels of the hydrotechnical installations is an important element for the development of full-fledged monitoring of the Kirov dam at the Talas river.

Establishment of the Donors` Consultative Group

With the support of the project a *Donors` Consultative Group for the Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on the Use of Water Management Facilities of Intergovernmental Status on the Chu and Talas Rivers* (DCG) was established. The main objective of DCG is to facilitate cooperation among donors in providing their support to the CTWC .

Climate change adaptation in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers

Under the UNECE Water Convention a *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change* has been developed. To test this Guidance one of several pilot projects has been established in the basins of the Chu Talas Rivers. The pilot project aims to increase the adaptive capacity of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the CTWC to ongoing and future climate change impacts, ensure coordination of adaptation actions in the basins of the Chu-Talas Rivers. The project is implemented by UNECE, UNDP and OSCE.

4. OUTLINE FOR FURTHER SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL KAZAKH –KYRGYZ WATER COOPERATION UNDER THE CHU-TALAS WATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION (CHU-TALAS III)

As a response to the challenge to manage jointly used water infrastructure and allocation of shared water resources between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the governments of both countries signed an intergovernmental agreement in January 2000 on the use of water management infrastructure on the rivers Chu and Talas.

With the support of a OSCE/UNECE/UNESCAP project (“Chu-Talas I”), a permanent commission was established in July 2006. Chu-Talas I also included the support to an agreement on how to define costs for exploitation and maintenance of the water management infrastructure. A follow-up OSCE-UNECE project “Development of Cooperation on the Chu and Talas Rivers” (“Chu-Talas II”) is currently in its last phase with results including the broadening of the bilateral cooperation, an improved understanding of the two countries on the available water resources, improved access to information as well as plans for the involvement of stakeholders.

There are several good reasons for continuing and intensifying the efforts of the OSCE and the UNECE to support the bilateral cooperation in a third phase. The previous projects have worked very well and the two organisations have become trusted partners with well established contacts in the two countries. As an example, the recent political events in Kyrgyzstan did not hinder the work of the OSCE/UNECE project. This also shows that the organisations are able to transfer the notion of ownership to the countries themselves – an important element for sustainability of the current support. Earlier projects have also shown that OSCE and UNECE work well together and complement each other with their respective organisational mandates.

The successful Chu-Talas cooperation is an important example for the whole Central Asian region and the support has a good visibility on the political as well as technical level. If a new project phase could be launched at the upcoming 10-year anniversary, planned for May 2011, this would ensure high-level attention to the 3rd project from the start.

In preparatory consultations with Kazakhstan as well as Kyrgyzstan the countries have expressed a strong wish for continued involvement of the OSCE and the UNECE in the further Chu-Talas work.

It is suggested that the following directions of work, in most cases building on previous project results, should be included in the Chu-Talas III project:

- Further development of legal and institutional basis including broadening of the mandate of the Commission and improved organizational structure for the cooperation.
This direction would be based of the results of Task 1 of Chu-Talas II, including the proposal on components to be included in a new agreement and conclusions on the possibility of a joint water management structure.
- Development of a joint vision for the protection of ecosystems in the river basins.
New direction of work that would be directed towards the development of interagency cooperation. A possible objective would be to broaden the Commission to include also representatives of environmental authorities.

- Improved information and dialogue with stakeholders and the public with regard to protection and use of the shared water resources.
Earlier work on the establishment of a joint website (Task 3 of Chu-Talas II) and the proposal on the establishment of a basin water council (Task 2 of Chu-Talas II) will be the basis of this work.
- Further activities aiming at implementation of a well-developed monitoring of the condition of the Kirov dam water facility at the Talas river.
This work follows up on the safety risk examination of the existing control-measurement system (Task 2 of Chu Talas II), its conditions and capacity to monitor safety of the water facility. The direction of work will also include development of proposals for modernization of the control-measurement system.
- Development of monitoring of the Chu-Talas basin ground waters.
Follow up of Task 7 of the Chu Talas II project “An improved understanding of the conditions for the formation and flow of transboundary groundwater in the basins of the Chu and Talas Rivers”.
- Development of Rules for exploitation for individual hydraulic structures for interstate use that will contribute to increased safety and efficient use of water.
New direction of work.
- Sharing of experience of cooperation with other countries on transboundary water cooperation.
New direction of work that would include information of the experience from cooperation on Chu-Talas as well as the possibility to attract experts from other river basins to Chu-Talas.