

I. Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia, phase 3 (v 21/11/2013)

II. Background

Dams and reservoirs are of major importance for the economy and development in Central Asia. Reservoirs ensure drinking water supply by contributing to seasonal and long-term regulation of river flows; and they provide a reliable source of water for irrigation, industrial water uses, and hydropower. Cooperation on the management of shared water resources is a pre-condition for sustainable development in the sub-region. Improved safety of dams contributes to reliability in the access and distribution of water and increase the resilience of water supply and sanitation in the face of climate change. The safe exploitation of the water reservoirs is thus crucial for the future of the Central Asian countries.

An accident in 2010 on the Kzyl-Agash dam in Kazakhstan contributed to a sense of urgency of joint work developing in Central Asia. While cooperation on water management in the region has become more difficult over the past decade, the dam safety cooperation has proven to be a platform where all five countries are solidly engaged in the dialogue.

Previous phases of the project, co-funded by the Russian Federation, have resulted in: a model national law on the safety of large hydraulic facilities, including dams, intended as a basis for national harmonized legal frameworks; and a draft regional agreement on cooperation on dam safety is being discussed. All Central Asian countries have been engaged in the improvement or revision of existing national legal provisions and institutional modalities for dam safety. Efforts have further been made on capacity building of experts and institutions. The third phase of the project started in the end of 2012 and is expected to be concluded in 2016. The project is being undertaken in cooperation with the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS).

Russian expertise will continue to be important for all components of the dam safety work in Central Asia: for capacity building, work on national legislation as well as demonstrating technical solutions for monitoring of the safety of individual dams.

The main components of the project are promotion of interstate cooperation and awareness raising, support to legislative and institutional strengthening on the national level, capacity building and practical pilot work on specific dams.

The project will take into account women's perspectives, as water users and carers of children, and family health especially with regard to the improved awareness of dam safety and related issues and the development of national legislation and strengthened institutions for dam safety.

The project is a part of the UNECE Water Convention Work Programme and has been developed in line with official requests from the beneficiary countries as to the priority areas of work.

The main groups involved in and influenced by the project are:

1. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for the Saving of the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS) is an important partner with the necessary mandate needed for project implementation providing coordination at the regional level and political support. EC-IFAS is also responsible for the development and implementation of the Aral Sea Basin Programme 3 that includes work on dam safety in line with this project.

2. National institutions in CA countries responsible for the safety of hydro-technical installations – are the national partners, responsible for coordination at the national level, political support, execution of national activities, financial support – co-funding of national activities. These are:

- Committee for water resources, Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Kazakhstan
- State Committee for Water Management and Melioration, Kyrgyzstan
- Ministry of Melioration and Water Resources, Tajikistan
- Ministry of Water Management, Turkmenistan
- Water Control Facilities Committee “Gozvodhoznadzor”, Uzbekistan

The project will be implemented 2014-2016.

III. Objective

To promote regional cooperation as well as national legislation and institutions with regard to dam safety, thereby contributing to improved human safety and also trust building and advancement of the economic, social, environmental situation in Central Asia.

IV. Expected accomplishments

- EA1** Improved inter-state cooperation as well as awareness on dam safety and related issues in Central Asia
- EA2** Improved national legislation and regulatory frameworks
- EA3** Raised technical and legal capacity of experts and officials on dam safety issues
- EA4** Improved safety and transboundary cooperation on individual dams

V. Indicators of achievement

- I1** Platform for inter-state cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia established
- I2** Improved national legislation and regulatory frameworks in minimum two countries
- I3** Raised technical and legal capacity of at least 40 experts and officials on dam safety issues
- I4** Improved safety and transboundary cooperation on minimum 2 individual dams on transboundary rivers

VI. Main activities

- A1** Annual regional meeting for exchange of information and development of interstate cooperation
- A2** Support to development of national legislation and institutions
- A3** Annual regional capacity building event to “train the trainers” including supply of equipment for training
- A4** Pilot activities on specific dams demonstrating technical solutions for transboundary safety monitoring

VII. Assumptions and Risks

The main threat to the timely and effective implementation of the project is the tense relations between some of the Central Asian countries that may make it difficult to develop regional initiatives and agree on joint work with regard to water management in general. However, cooperation around the issue of dam safety has in the earlier phases been a unifying factor and this is one of the major strengths of this project.

The project strategy is to capitalise on the first-hand experience of the previous phases for example make use of the good relationships established between the countries to identify, assess and manage threats to the timely and effective project implementation in a collaborative manner, emphasise the technical nature of the project to ensure a neutral environment conducive to cooperation and trust and pursue a diversified resource mobilisation strategy in support to the sustainability of the project.

VIII. Budget

The annual budget requested from the Russian Federation is 100,000 USD, in total 300,000 USD over three years.

Projected co-funding is:

- From UNECE in-kind – 20,000 USD

- From participating countries in-kind – 30,000 USD
- From other extra-budgetary projects: - 25,000 USD

The opportunity to get further co-funding from other sources is being investigated.

IX. Work plan

Expected accomplishment (EA)	Activity	Tentative timeframe by activity/output			Cost estimates (in US \$)	Partners	Beneficiaries	Venue, timeframe and the expected number of participants (where applicable)
		2014	2015	2016				
EA 1: Improved inter-state cooperation as well as awareness on dam safety and related issues in Central Asia.	A1 Annual regional meeting for exchange of information and development of interstate cooperation	x	x	x	70,000	ESCAP, IFAS	National authorities responsible for dam safety	Annually in three different countries with approximately 30 participants each meeting
EA 2: Improved national legislation and regulatory frameworks;	A2 Support to development of national legislation and institutions	x	x	x	70,000	ESCAP	National authorities including those responsible for dam safety	Expert legislative and institutional support, national seminars on the request of Central Asian countries (up to 25 participants)
EA 3: Raised technical and legal capacity of experts and officials on dam safety issues	A3 Annual regional capacity building event to “train the trainers” including supply of equipment for training	x	x	x	80,000	ESCAP, IFAS, EADB	National authorities as well as organizations responsible for maintenance of infrastructure	Capacity building courses developed in cooperation with national authorities – in total involving minimum 40 experts

EA 4: Improved safety and transboundary cooperation on individual dams;	A4 Pilot activities on specific dams demonstrating technical solutions for transboundary safety monitoring	x	x	x	80,000	ESCAP, Chu-Talas Bilateral Commission	National authorities as well as organizations responsible for maintenance of infrastructure	Specific interventions to demonstrate technical solution for joint safety monitoring on minimum 2 dams
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