

Key conclusions of the project inception workshop



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Key conclusions of the inception workshop (1/2)

- The Government of Kazakhstan, in a view of the importance and existing needs in improving the safety of tailing facilities, stressed its support to the UNECE pilot project in Kazakhstan and beyond in Central Asia, which was initiated through the conduct of the national self-assessment and drafting the action plan, which formed the basis for the development of this project.
- The Chair of the Water Convention noted the linkages of the Water Convention with the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents through the UNECE Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG). Kazakhstan, as Chair of the Water Convention, will pay increased attention to the activities of the JEG and, through its activities, to the interaction with the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.
- Kazakhstan expressed its gratitude to UNECE and the government of Switzerland for the support in financing and implementing the project. UNECE stressed the progress made to date in the project thanks to the Kazakh commitment to the project.
- Switzerland welcomed and expressed support to Kazakhstan's efforts to enhance the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities (TMFs). Switzerland also welcomed and supported Kazakhstan's efforts to conduct the 3rd EPR with a focus on SDGs, green economy and through the prism of the Belt and Road Initiative perspectives.
- Participants approved the objectives of the project – strengthening the safety of tailing facilities, contribution to strengthening the capacity of the involved agencies and mechanisms of inter-institutional cooperation in Kazakhstan and with other Central Asian countries, support of the competent authorities of Kazakhstan by the inventory and ranking of tailing facilities for public health and the environment, with a special focus on objects that can cause cross-border pollution. Participants also agreed with the project activities and implementation plan presented by UNECE.

Key conclusions of the inception workshop (2/2)

- Participants recognized the importance of inter-institutional collaboration and agreed to establish an inter-institutional Working Group on Tailings Safety and Water Management in Kazakhstan. The Working Group should conduct its first meeting(s) back-to-back with the project activities, and Kyrgyzstan was invited to participate in its work.
- Participants thanked the international experts and national experts from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for the interesting cases and lessons learned from past tailings accidents presented. They further acknowledged the severe consequences, including in a transboundary context, that TMF accidents may cause and agreed that safety and preventing accidents should be put first.
- Participants stressed the importance of continuing to share experiences and information with one another, notably at the subregional level with other Central Asian countries.
- Participants welcomed the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for TMFs and the TMF methodology and acknowledged them as good tools to support competent authorities and operators in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries in improving and managing tailings safety. Participants also agreed to use the TMF methodology at the upcoming onsite training and welcomed the intention of Kazakhstan to explore the introduction of the Methodology into its respective national regulations.
- Participants welcomed Kazakhstan's commitment to the project implementation by its submission of the inventory with TMFs and agreed to map the TMFs in Kazakhstan, including those with possible transboundary effects, in a similar way as done in the projects in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine. Kyrgyzstan also expressed its intention to submit its TMF data for the subsequent preparation of their inventory and mapping.
- Participants agreed with proposed timeline and activities of the project.