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tərəfindən maliyyələşdirilir



Azərbaycan Respublikası  
Ekologiya və Təbii Sərvatlar  
Nazirliyi

# PROCEEDINGS AND OUTCOMES OF THE

## 10th Meeting of the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in Azerbaijan followed by Thematic Workshop on Nature Based Solutions

5-6 April 2023  
Baku, Azerbaijan



Funded by  
the European Union

**EU4Environment**  
Water and Data in Eastern Partner Countries

## 1. Proceedings and Outcomes

### 1.1. The National Policy Dialogue

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Integrated Water Resources Management engaged a broad representation from national and local authorities, academic and NGO communities. Chaired by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and organised with support from the European Union, the NPD meeting took stock of priorities for water management and the environment, reviewed progress with recent policy reforms in the water sector and briefed the steering committee members on the latest developments with ongoing national and international projects in Azerbaijan. It was followed by a workshop on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) on 6 April.

During the opening session, Deputy Minister Tagiyeva spoke about the importance of water issues in Azerbaijan, particularly in the context of population growth and climate change. Deputy Minister Tagiyeva also spoke about the recent United Nations Water Conference in New York in March 2023 and about Azerbaijan's and the EU's commitment to the Water Action Agenda.

Mr Peter Michalko, Ambassador of the European Union in Azerbaijan, also provided opening remarks, emphasising that the European Union is supporting Azerbaijan to achieve sustainable reforms in the water sector as part of the EU4Environment programme. He noted that the EU Economic and Investment Plan also plays a role in assisting Azerbaijan and other Eastern Partnership countries in transforming their economies and making them more resilient. However, he noted that this cannot be achieved without a clear water strategy, modern water management tools and stakeholder engagement.

Session 1 was a dialogue on water resources management in the framework of the “EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data” Programme. The programme's implementing partners (the Environment Agency Austria (UBA), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the International Office for Water (OiEau), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)) presented programme progress in Azerbaijan in areas such as river basin planning, water monitoring, including wastewater-based epidemiological surveillance, transboundary cooperation, and economic instruments. The NPD participants engaged with comments and questions on programme implementation, and expressed satisfaction with progress on programme implementation.

Session 2, led by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, focussed on Azerbaijan's current situation regarding water use and protection. Government officials discussed Azerbaijan's draft water strategy, water use in agriculture and irrigation, and ongoing plans related to water use in other economic sectors, such as energy and recreation, as well as plans for water resources protection and sustainable management, including the establishment of the new State Water Resources Agency. In particular, Azerbaijan's draft water strategy was a strong point of discussion. The strategy has been under development for some years, with significant input received from international partners, in particular the now completed “EU Water Initiative Plus” Programme. Government representatives noted that there was an urgent need to finalise the water strategy, institutionalising Integrated Water Resources Management and River Basin Management Planning approaches.

Session 3 facilitated a dialogue on environmental statistics and open data. Progress made in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme was discussed, as was the need for more open access to data, enhancing international cooperation on data with the European Environment Agency, and pushing forward with data and progress on land and air quality data.

The NPD also had an important coordination role among international partners supporting Azerbaijan on water and environmental data-related issues. The breadth of projects discussed during Session 4 ranged from infrastructure to finance to awareness raising, underlining the importance and benefits of further enhancing communication between both the different actors and the government.

Key outcomes of the discussions included:

- A commitment from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources to revise and finalize the water strategy within the next few months, ensuring that it enshrined good international practice, aligned with the EU Water Framework Directive and guiding principles of Integrated Water Resources Management. Implementing Partners confirmed their availability for any support still needed.
- Agreement to finalise delineation of basin districts and create an enabling environment for the enhanced application of the basin management approach through River Basin Management Plans.
- A call for an approach to sequencing tariff and policy changes that takes into account their impact on different sectors, to ensure that changes are well understood by stakeholders and can be adapted to.
- Support for further institutionalising the IWRM approach through the newly established State Water Resources Agency by enshrining IWRM in its principles. Implementing Partners are ready to provide required support to the new Agency.
- Agreement on the need for application of prioritized and equitable water allocation with due attention to ecosystem flow needs and environmental flows.
- Agreement that stakeholders in Azerbaijan must take into account the economic dimensions of water to ensure the benefits and costs of water management are properly evaluated.
- Support for furthering transboundary cooperation through, for example, increased and joint water monitoring and information sharing.
- A commitment to revisit the current approach and legal framework for management of water and environmental data, to make it more accessible to national stakeholders.
- Agreement that international organizations and projects should regularly coordinate and communicate their activities to maximise synergies in implementation.

### **Workshop and site visit on Nature-based Solutions**

NbS is a relatively new concept in Azerbaijan and there was enthusiastic participation in the workshop, with diverse stakeholders represented. Opening remarks on the EU approach were provided by Karin Zaunberger of the European Commission's DG Environment via a video address and James Dalton of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) complimented with a scene-setting presentation about the broader context. These interventions spurred great interest from national participants about what qualified as an NbS, how they could be deployed, and how they could be financed. Across back-to-back sessions, existing projects in Azerbaijan were discussed, followed by a look at some examples from beyond its borders. What came out clearly in the discussion is that though the

concept is new, some of what is happening in Azerbaijan’s water management sector already qualifies or is close to being nature-based.

As part of the NbS workshop, a site visit was made to Khojahasan Lake, near Baku. Mr Mukhtar Babayev, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, joined the site visit and invited participants to take part in a tree planting ceremony and an animated discussion about Azerbaijan’s ambitious plans for environment and water sectors, the EU4Environment Water and Data Programme, the outcomes of the NPD, and the need to finalise the water strategy.

## 2. Participation and visibility

Across the 1.5 days over 76 participants joined the NPD and NbS workshop, almost entirely in person. Participants were 34% female and 66% male representing a very diverse list of public and private stakeholders.

Five different Azerbaijani media outlets published about the NPD meeting. A Twitter post by UNECE Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health also made mention of the European Union. A news article was published on the website of the French-Azerbaijani University, which mentions the EU4Environment programme, and was later shared on the Facebook page of the programme, who had previously reported about the NPD.

Key links are reproduced below:

- Azerbaijani Press Agency: <https://apa.az/az/sosial/milli-su-siyaseti-dialoqunun-novbeti-gorusu-kecirilib-757589>
- Modern.az: <https://modern.az/dunya/404234/milli-su-siyaseti-dialoqunun-nvbeti-grusu-kecirilir-fotolar/>
- Qaynar Xətt: <https://qaynarxett.com/milli-su-siyas%C9%99ti-dialoqunun-novb%C9%99ti-gorusu-kecirilib/>
- Turk.az: <https://www.turk.az/milli-su-siyas%C9%99ti-dialoqunun-novb%C9%99ti-gorusu-kecirilir/>
- AZ Press media: <https://azpressmedia.az/news3019>
- UNECE Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health Twitter Posts: [https://twitter.com/UNECE\\_Water/status/1643689749998100615](https://twitter.com/UNECE_Water/status/1643689749998100615)  
[https://twitter.com/UNECE\\_Water/status/1645380334094041090](https://twitter.com/UNECE_Water/status/1645380334094041090)
- UNECE Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health LinkedIn post: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/water-convention-protocol-on-water-health\\_azerbaijan-europeanunion-water-activity-7049674158993006592-tAEY?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/water-convention-protocol-on-water-health_azerbaijan-europeanunion-water-activity-7049674158993006592-tAEY?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)
- Article from the French-Azerbaijani University: <https://www.ufaz.az/en/news/project-manager-of-oieau-international-office-for-water-visited-ufaz/>
- EU4Environment Facebook Posts: <https://www.facebook.com/EU4Envwaterdata/posts/pfbid0qr3sMPE9pN1c691yPSqjz3jYU37W9LTzcBYozHGDMlwi4pJvDfWfY6gPxxwMNhtS2l> and <https://www.facebook.com/EU4Envwaterdata/posts/pfbid02Cwrjdf9XHXqNqHec4g5CFvm7VEzFs8kuWUxYmGj3YGyDhrar6zv3wcGybfzfx6bs1l>

### About National Policy Dialogues

National Policy Dialogues facilitates policy discussions where stakeholders meet to advance water policy reforms. NPDs are driven by the demand from the host countries and are usually chaired by heads of respective government agencies. A variety of stakeholders participate in the meetings, such as ministries and government agencies and institutions, as well as nongovernmental organisations, the business community, parliamentary bodies, academia. Participants typically include international organisations and EU Member States active in water policy reforms in each country. Under the EU-funded EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme, NPDs are supported in the five Eastern Partnership countries.

### About EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data

This programme aims at improving people's wellbeing in EU's Eastern Partner Countries and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme's activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens. The programme is implemented by five Partner organisations: Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The programme is principally funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and the French Artois-Picardie Water Agency based on a budget of EUR 12,75 million (EUR 12 million EU contribution). The implementation period is 2021-2024.

### 3. Annexes

#### 3.1. List of in-person participants

| N  | Name              | Gender (M/F) | Organization, position                         | Contact Information (e-mail, phone) (optional)                         |
|----|-------------------|--------------|--|--|
| 1. | Umayra Tagiyeva   | F            | Deputy Minister, MENR                          | umayrataghiyeva@gmail.com  |
| 2. | Peter Michalko    | M            | Ambassador of the European Union in Azerbaijan |  |
| 3. | Ramila Aslanova   | F            | EU Delegation to Azerbaijan                    | ramila.aslanova@eeas.europa.eu   |
| 4. | Faig Mutallimov   | M            | Head of Environmental Policy Division, MENR    | faig.mutallimov@gmail.com  |
| 5. | Rafiq Verdiyev    | M            | Water Advisor, MENR                            | rafig2000@mail.ru  |
| 6. | Asif Verdiyev     | M            | NHS, MENR                                      | asifverdiyev@mail.ru   |
| 7. | Aynur Mutallimov  | F            | Water Advisor, MENR                            | aynur.aliyeva12@gmail.com  |
| 8. | Leyla Tagizadeh   | F            | Ministry Health                                | <a href="mailto:leylatagizadeh@yahoo.com">leylatagizadeh@yahoo.com</a> |
| 9. | Vafadar Ismayilov | M            | NHS, MENR                                      | is_vafadar@mail.ru   |



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| 15 | Chingiz Mammadov  | M            | UNDP   | chingiz.mammadov@undp.org                      |
| 16 | Rashad Huseynov   | M            | UNICEF   |  |
| 17 | Nusreddin Nasibov | M            | Advisor in Padar Regional office of Azersun            | nusreddin.nasibov@mail.ru                      |
| 18 | Ali Aghayev       | M            | Head of Ganja office of Hydromet                       | mr.gancarhm@mail.ru                            |
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| 20 | Said Mahmudov     | M            | Agency of Ministry of Agriculture                      | said.mahmudov@agro.gov.az                      |



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| 21       | Khudu Mammadov    | M                   | Professor of Ganja University                | x.mamedov@mail.ru                                     |
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| 23       | Farid Alekberli   | M                   | Farmer, Central Kura river basin stakeholder | ssheggy@mail.ru                                       |
| 24       | Ilham Hasanov     | M                   | Ujar region irrigation water user            | ilham62@inbox.ru                                      |
| 25       | Hidayat Muradov   | M                   | Mountainous Shirvan region, Hydromet, MENR   | muradov.hidayaet.58@gmail.com                         |
| 26       | Suraya Suleymanli | F                   | Farmer, river basin stakeholder              | surayas@mail.ru                                       |
| 27       | Matanat Avazova   | F                   | Monitoring sector of NHS, MENR               | mavazova@mail.ru                                      |
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| 36 | Mirmovsum Dadashov, | M            | Director of Amelioration Scientific Research Institute                             |  |
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| 38 | Emil Mammadov       | M            | State Statistics Committee, Head of the subdivision on Environmental statistics    | emil.mammadov@stat.gov.az                      |
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| 43 | Rza Mahmudov    | M            | Ministry of Science and Education, Head of the division of the Geography Institute              |  |
| 44 | Alovsat Guliyev | M            | Ministry of Science and Education   |  |
| 45 | Elshan Ahmadov  | M            | Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan              | elshen80@gmail.com                             |
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| 47 | Farid Osmanov   | M            | Azerenergy  |  |

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| 53 | Vusal Hajizadeh  | M            | NHS, MENR, Director  | v.hajizade@gmail.com                           |
| 54 | Vafa Mammadova   | F            | MENR   | vafamammadova80@mail.ru                        |
| 55 | Hasan Musayev    | M            | NHS, MENR, Director  | hasanmusayev7@gmail.com                        |
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| 62       | Gunay Sultanova    | F                   | Ministry of Energy            | Gunay.sultanova@mienergy.gov.az                       |
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| 67       | Vasif Mammadov     | M                   | Nap project UNDP              | Vasif.mammadov@undp.org                               |
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| 73       | Tamar Loladze       | F                   | UBA                           | <a href="mailto:t.loladze@eu4waterdata.eu">t.loladze@eu4waterdata.eu</a>                   |
| 74       | Philippe Seguin     | M                   | IOW                           | <a href="mailto:p.seguin@oieau.fr">p.seguin@oieau.fr</a>                                   |
| 75       | Alexander Belokurov | M                   | UNECE                         | <a href="mailto:alexander.belokurov@un.org">alexander.belokurov@un.org</a>                 |
| 76       | James Dalton        | M                   | IUCN                          | <a href="mailto:james.dalton@iucn.org">james.dalton@iucn.org</a>                           |
| 77       | Vladimir Giorgiev   | M                   | IOM                           |  |

### 3.2. Agenda

## 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in Azerbaijan followed by thematic workshop on Nature Based Solutions

**Date:**  
5-6 April  
2023

**Venue:**  
Excelsior Hotel  
2 Heydar Aliyev Ave, Baku 1154

**Time:**  
5 April – 09:00-18:00  
6 April: 09:00-13:00  
6 April (pm): Optional site visit  
(registration required)

### AGENDA

| DAY 1  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 10TH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE |   |  |
| Local Time   | Item  | Speaker  |
| 09:00-09:30  | Registration and welcome coffee   |  |
| 09:30-09:50  | Opening and welcoming statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Adoption of Agenda</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Representative from Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</li> <li>- Peter Michalko, Ambassador of the European Union in Azerbaijan</li> <li>- A. Zinke, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme</li> </ul> |
| 9:50-11:10   | Thematic Session 1: Dialogue on water resources management in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme<br><br>Session to include progress on River Basin Management Planning, Water Monitoring including COVID monitoring, Economic Instruments, Mobilizing Finance, Water and Health, Legislative developments and Transboundary cooperation<br><br>The discussion will build around key policy questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the priorities to advance IWRM / WFD implementation?</li> <li>• What are the current challenges for implementation?</li> <li>• How can transboundary cooperation on water be advanced?</li> <li>• What are the commitments and key take aways for Azerbaijan from the UN Water Conference?</li> </ul> | Moderator: OECD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UBA</li> <li>- IOW</li> <li>- UNECE</li> <li>- OECD</li> </ul>  |



|             |  |   |
|-------------|--|---|
| 11:10-11:30 | Coffee Break   |   |
| 11:30-12:10 | <p>Thematic Session 2: Dialogue on Azerbaijan’s draft Water Strategy and other ongoing developments in Water Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Strategy of Azerbaijan and associated activities</li> <li>• Water use in agriculture</li> <li>• Melioration and irrigation in Azerbaijan</li> <li>• Other ongoing and planned activities</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p>  | <p>Moderator: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</li> <li>- Firidun Taghiyev, Head of Soil Control Division, Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>- Mirmovsum Dadashov, Director of Amelioration Scientific Research Institute</li> </ul> |
| 12:10-13:10 | <p>Thematic Session 3: Dialogue on environmental statistics and open data in the framework of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme</p> <p>Session to include progress on environmental data and open data issues, including water accounts, environmental data, air quality, waste, land cover mapping and international co-operation.</p> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key priorities for inter-ministerial cooperation and access to environmental statistics and open data?</li> <li>• What are the challenges for implementation?</li> </ul> | <p>Moderator: UBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UBA</li> <li>- IOW</li> <li>- UNECE</li> </ul>   |
| 13:10-14:30 | Lunch  |   |
| 14:30-15:30 | <p>Thematic Session 4: Donor coordination Part 1 on challenges and opportunities for water sector.</p> <p>Presentations and exchanges on relevant projects and donors active on water in Azerbaijan. To discuss ongoing activities and principles, achievements, challenges and future opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twinning project “Strengthening hydrometeorological and climate services in Azerbaijan”</li> <li>• Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Irrigation project</li> <li>• EU4Environment Green Economy</li> <li>• Asian Development Bank</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p>    | <p>Moderator: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ljubov Joanna Liman, Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI)</li> <li>- Aynur Seidyusif, FAO</li> <li>- Kamran Rzayev, EU4Environment Green Economy</li> <li>- Faraj Huseynbeyov, ADB</li> </ul>                                |
| 15:30-16:00 | Coffee Break   |   |

|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 16:00-17:00 | <p>Thematic session 4: Donor coordination Part 2 on challenges and opportunities for water sector financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP climate change national adaptation project</li> <li>• EU4Climate adaptation project</li> <li>• UNICEF Climate Resilient Water Safety Plan</li> <li>• International Organization for Migration (IOM) water projects</li> <li>• World Bank IWRM capacity building project (TBC)</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A and discussion</p> | <p>Moderator: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chingiz Mammadov, UNDP</li> <li>- TBC</li> <li>- Rashad Huseynov, UNICEF</li> <li>- Vladimir Giorgiev, IOM</li> <li>- World Bank (TBC)</li> </ul> |
| 17:00-18:00 | <p>Closing discussion and meeting summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair to provide closing statement, key messages, decisions, next steps, and an introductory overview of Day 2</li> <li>• Open discussion and reflection by participants</li> </ul>   | <p>Representative from Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</p> <p>all participants</p>   |
| 18:00-19:30 | Networking Cocktail  |  |

## DAY 2

## THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON POTENTIAL OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT IN AZERBAIJAN

| Time        | Item   | Speaker  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 08:30-09:00 | <b>Registration &amp; Welcome coffee/tea</b>   |  |
| 09:00-09:15 | <b>Opening remarks</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</li> <li>- Karin Zaunberger, EC DG Environment (via video)</li> <li>- Belokurov, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme</li> </ul> |
| 09:15-09:30 | <b>Scene-setting presentation</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- James Dalton, IUCN</li> </ul>   |
| 09:30-10:15 | <p><b>Experience from Azerbaijan</b></p> <p>Speakers in this session will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</li> <li>- Efficiency use of scarce water resources in Azerbaijan, Riad Akhundzadeh, Amelioration JSC</li> <li>- Azersu JSC</li> <li>- Kahrizs (Qanats) in Azerbaijan and their efficiency use perspectives, Alovzat Guliyev, Ministry of Science and Education</li> <li>- Research of geomorphological changes in the Kura river delta using aerospace methods, Turkan Mamishova Ecology Institute, National Aerospace Agency of Azerbaijan</li> </ul> <p>Following the presentations, there will be a Q&amp;A.</p> | Moderator: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources   |
| 10:15-10:40 | <b>Coffee Break</b>  |  |
| 10:40-11:30 | <p><b>Experience from outside Azerbaijan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managed aquifer recharge (new EU guidance)</li> <li>- Joint management of floods between upstream and downstream areas</li> <li>- Creation of buffer zones between water and agriculture</li> <li>- Payment for forest management to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation in reservoirs.</li> <li>- A mechanism by development co-operation partners to support NbS</li> </ul>  | <p>Moderator: OECD</p> <p>UBA<br/>IUCN<br/>IOW</p>   |
| 11:30-12:00 | <p><b>Moderated discussion</b></p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are existing and potential Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for river basin management in Azerbaijan?</li> <li>- How have existing NbS in the country been identified, developed and implemented?</li> <li>- What are challenges to promoting and scaling up to NbS in Azerbaijan?</li> </ul>   | <p>Moderator: UNECE</p> <p>All participants</p>  |

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
|             | - What can the EU4Environment programme, together with development cooperation partners, do to support Azerbaijan?  |   |
| 12:00-12:15 | <p><b>Closing remarks and next steps</b></p> <p>- Possibly to highlight/agree on key priorities (e.g. types of NbS, regions, landscape) that can be included in the “roadmap” to be developed under the EU4Environment Project.</p>   | <p>Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources</p> <p>Representative of EU4Environment Water and Data Programme</p> |
| 12:15-13:15 | <b>Lunch</b>  |   |
| 13:15-17:00 | <p><b>Field trip to Khojahasan Lake NBS site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greening and Landscape Open JSC (who manage the project under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources) will provide a guided tour of the site, with information on previous status, impacts of the Nature-based Solution, and expected long-term outcomes.</li> </ul> |   |

### 3.3. Pictures

#### NPD meeting on 5 April 2023



#### Field visit to Khojahasan Lake Nbs site 6 April 2023



Credit pictures: Aghali Mirsadig