

“Benefits for All – Cooperating for Water / Together for Water.”

What GWP CACENA has done to further water cooperation

Existence of GWP CACENA as a network created the unique opportunities and platform for dialogues addressing water issues among parties who due to political or other reasons have obstacles/barriers for cooperation (for example, between Armenia and Azerbaijan who are actually in conditions of political confrontation). Within GWP CACENA those parties are collaborating in full capacity and very beneficially for both sides.

Annually in the beginning of June CWP Armenia and GWP partners in Azerbaijan are organizing a round table on "Transboundary water resources management" and public manifestations, devoted to Kura-Araks Protection Day. The Kura-Araks Basin is transboundary watershed shared by four countries (Turkey, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). The 2nd of June is mutually accepted by all riparian countries as the Kura-Araks Protection Day.

As example, it could be mentioned the round table, which was organized in June 2011 by CWP-Armenia for Dilijan region, and attended by principal stakeholders: representatives of local self-governance administrations, NGOs, Rescue Service of the Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situation, Dilijan National Park employees, "Arevordi" Environmental organization's members, journalists (in total 30 participants). The following issues were discussed during the round table:

- Legal bases for transboundary river management process and preconditions for enforcement of the Convention on the protection and use of trans-boundary watercourses and international lakes (Helsinki Convention, 1992) in Armenia.
- Participation of stakeholders and the public in the process of development of integrated river basin management plans.
- The role of river basin councils in the involvement of stakeholders and the public.

Information leaflets and cloth-bags with logos of GWP and Kura-Araks regional coalition were disseminated among the meeting participants.



Photos from meeting in Armenia, June 2011

In the same day, GWP partners in Azerbaijan led by NGO "Safsu - Centre for Eco-Melioration Monitoring" had conducted workshop "Principles of Joint Management of Transboundary River Basins" in Baku. The workshop was attended by specialists from local authorities of the National

Agency for Water Management and Land Reclamation, the research and design institutes, mass-media representatives. The topics for discussion during workshop were:

- Participation of stakeholders and the public in the process of development of integrated river basin management plans.
- The role of river basin councils in the involvement of stakeholders and the public.



Photo from workshop in Baku, June 2011.

During last five years it was observed that the coordinated awareness campaigns in both countries and sharing knowledge and ideas about ways for cooperation on transboundary basin under initiatives of GWP CACENA brought two countries - Azerbaijan and Armenia - to closer cooperation, in spite of existing political tensions.

In general, the GWP CACENA - as knowledge bringer - contributes a lot to existing rich experience that provides guiding principles for improvements of transboundary water management over the CACENA region. Specifically, the following recommendations were articulated as strategic directions by group of experts invited by GWP CACENA, which are going to be delivered to the governments in 2013 - the International Year of Water Cooperation:

Basin-wide approach needed: link ownership and sustainability

- Ensure the stability and the security of the each riparian country within the basin;
- Promote closer regional cooperation within sub-regions: Central Asia and Caucasus;
- Build upon achievements already made in the CACENA countries;
- Make donor assistance conditional upon transboundary cooperation;
- Encourage regional political and financial commitments;
- Allow regional institutions to be stronger leaders by locals, but not donors.

Negotiation strategy needed: based on the creative approaches

- Apply issue-linkage strategies, e.g. water for energy, water for food, water and green growth, etc.;
- Offer incentives to constituencies who may lose from cooperation;
- Carry out basic dispute resolution functions: information flow, fair treatment, and sustainable processes;

- Allow local solutions to transboundary activities – specially in small transboundary basins;
- Encourage publication of water management costs/economic indicators.

Better programme management needed: based on networking and increased authority

- Commit to coordination and knowledge sharing;
- Make conflict prevention measures to be integral part of programs and projects;
- Support existing institutions in cross-sectoral activities;
- Encourage cooperation with global knowledge networks – GWP is first priority.

Those three directions for enforcement of transboundary cooperation in CACENA region will be the core of the GWP CACENA Strategy 2014-2019.

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