

GWP CACENA in June 2008

Accreditation of five CWPs. On 17 June at a small ceremony held in Atyrau, Kazakhstan four Country Water Partnerships of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were given their Accreditation Letters from GWPO out of the hands of Bjorn Guterstam, the Network Officer, while the fifth CWP Georgia was congratulated in their absence.

In a press release from Stockholm it was said that: “In the last 15 years countries have started to move away from a command management towards participatory and sustainable management of their water resources where stakeholders from various sectors contribute. This typically entails improving governance and reforming the institutions responsible for water, building capacity and raising public awareness as well as increasing political commitment to addressing critical challenges.

Partnerships serve as a convening mechanism in these reform processes since they provide a platform for all stakeholders and address the water problems at both regional and national levels based on the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management.”

During 17-19 June GWP CACENA met for a second workshop on Water Financing as a follow up of the Water Financing Meeting in Tbilisi (Feb. 2008). Both meetings were sponsored by the EUWI Financing Work Group. The two days workshop focussed local and country level aspects of water financing. It included a ToolBox training part and regional water financing part on Water Users Associations. The venue was located in city of Atyrau, situated at the Ural River delta on NW coast of The Caspian Sea, i.e. in the western-most Ural-Caspian river basin of Kazakhstan. Atyrau has the fastest growing economy of Kazakhstan and consequently in Central Asia, because of its rich oil reserves which are exploited in cooperation with American oil companies.

The workshop convened by the regional coordinator, Vadim Sokolov and with twenty participants (six women) from six of the eight countries of GWP CACENA, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, while participants from Turkmenistan and Georgia for special reasons could not attend. Among them were experts from ministries, agencies, science and two chairs of the newly established river basin councils according to the adopted IWRM plan of Kazakhstan, i.e. Ural-Caspian BWO and Ili-Alakol BWO.

Regional Coordinator of the GWP CACENA Vadim Sokolov took participation in the 3rd Governing Council Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF), which was organized in occasion of the 1st Singapore International Water Week (June 23 – 27) in Singapore. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large of Singapore. It was the first GC meeting since the landmark 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit held in Beppu, Japan, and was addressed to follow-up and review progress on water initiatives over the five corners of the region.

On 26 June in Singapore twelve organizations from across the Asia-Pacific region launched a network to share solutions for improving water management to tackle the region’s many pressing water challenges. The network, known as “KnowledgeHubs,” is an initiative of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, which was established in 2006 with support from Japan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to promote leadership and boost investment in the water sector.

“The region is in urgent need of updated solutions—and more water professionals to implement them,” ADB Lead Water Resources Specialist Wouter Lincklaen Arriens said at the launch. “KnowledgeHubs will harness the region’s rich experience with water issues and give governments, water sector agencies, institutions and communities access to the best solutions available.”

KnowledgeHubs is supported by ADB, Singapore’s national water agency PUB, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education.

At the launch, Ravi Narayanan, Vice Chair of the forum’s Governing Council, introduced the 12 founding members of KnowledgeHubs. They are PUB WaterHub, Singapore; International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management, Japan; National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia; Center for River Basin Organizations and Management, Indonesia; Korea Water Resources Corporation, the Republic of Korea; Center for Hydroinformatics in River Basins at the Yellow River Conservancy Commission, the People’s Republic of China; Institute of Water Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore; International Water Management Institute, Sri Lanka; Central Asia IWRM Resource Center, Uzbekistan; Pacific IWRM Resource Centre, the Fiji Islands; International Research and Training Center on Erosion and Sedimentation, the People’s Republic of China; and the International WaterCentre, Australia.

The First Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 5th World Water Forum also was organized on 27th June in Singapore with the participation of the Secretariat of the 5th World Water Forum, representatives from Istanbul, the World Water Council and more than 25 leading institutions from the region.