

Collaboration between ADB and Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia for the Establishment of Gender and Water Network (**GWANET**) in Central Asia and Capacity Development of Sector Organizations on Gender Mainstreaming

Background

May 2007: ADB signed a Letter of Agreement with the SIC ICWC to establish a Gender and Water Network (GWANET) in Central Asian Republics (CARs) to improve gender awareness among the water sector stakeholders at regional, national and local levels, and strengthen their capacity in incorporating gender issues into the decision-making process.

The main counterparts: representative of government, NGOs, international agencies, farmers, research institutes and universities in CARs recognized that gender is central to water management. Water and agriculture projects and programs have failed to incorporate gender issues within their operations and they have collectively agreed to form a network on an informal basis to undertake specific activities as a first step in changing this reality.

1. Gender awareness promotion through focus group discussions and training for the water sector stakeholders at regional, national and local levels
2. Capacity building of water sector organizations to mainstream gender at the decision-making level

Main results

The main activities and results under the first component include: focus group discussions and training of the water sector stakeholders at regional, national and local levels, dissemination of training materials, newspapers, and brochure, conducting the awareness meetings for the water sector stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan, Water User Association (WUA) and farms in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, establishing and supporting gender and water network (currently 70 members), developing a knowledge base (consists of 89 different normative documents in English and Russian), maintaining a web site - www.gender.cawater-info.net (Russian/English) and a forum. Additionally, producing and mailing monthly newsletters and disseminating them through mailing list to 62 subscribers (80 newsletters in total), preparing and mailing two collection of the normative documents in the field of GAD (50 copies each). 200 leaflets were published and disseminated (attached) /also are available on web site. Three articles were published in the following republican periodicals: (i) "Water, Land, People" newspaper; (ii) e-publication "Ecois"; (iii) "Agropress" newspaper (Kyrgyz).

Under the Capacity Building of water sector organizations component implemented by the SIC ICWC the following workshops were held: (i) in Urgench/Uzbekistan – familiarization workshop for Amudarya lower reaches for 17 participants from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, (28-30 June 2007), (ii) in Kyrgyzstan for 31 participants (3 August 2007), (iii) in Tashkent – training for 20 trainers from all five CA republics, (25-29 September 2007), (iv) in Khodjent –Tajikistan, (19-21 October 2007) for 31 participants, (v) in Almaty/Kazakhstan – for 31 participants (2-3 April 2008), (vi) in Ashgabad/Turkmenistan – 25 participants (6-7 May 2008).

The established network supports discussions with stakeholders for identification of water management problems and ways of their solution and sharing of experience in promoting gender balance. The network posts all gender-related news throughout the region and results of workshops on Gender and Water in its newsletter, which is published and disseminated on monthly basis through printed copies (more than 120 copies each



month) and GWANet-ICWC window. (More than 500 people visited this window last month). Besides, each month, groups of field advisors, who work with farmers and give them recommendations and consultations on technology of growing, time and rate of irrigation water application, etc. disseminated 1000 copies of the newsletter through “mobilization agents” in Andijan, Ferghana (Uzbekistan) and Sogd (Tajikistan) provinces. The monitoring is organized in two ways: through “mobilization agents” in the provinces for efficiency of using field recommendations and through feedback on the newsletter on www.cawater-info.net, www.gender.cawater-info.net



In total the GWANET project held workshops/seminars with participation of 155 people and prepared 25 trainers in order to promote further dissemination of knowledge and awareness on gender equality in water management. The network involved professionals at all levels. The target groups were represented by at: (i) macro-level – decision-makers; (ii) medium level – water professionals, researchers, NGOs, and (iii) village level – rural women and men.

Feedback received

All counterparts expressed their interest and willingness to continue gender-related work in the water sector in CA regions. After TOT, all participants developed individual plan of actions to monitor gender-related activities in water sector of CARs. New website contains a lot of interesting and useful information to mainstream gender and development in water sector in CA. ADB's pioneer GAD activity in water sector of CA is very useful and need to be continued.

Key factors for GWANET's success:

The development of the web-site and the establishment of GWANET allowed for: raising awareness and promoting gender mainstreaming in the region; attaining more knowledge and understanding of gender issues in water management; exchanging experience and best practices on the matter, translating theoretical concepts on gender into action; building profile for the need of gender sensitization and a platform for women's voices within the governance structures of the region; laying the foundation of further cooperation leading to successful gender sensitive water management; creating the network among concerned agencies and individuals to facilitate further cooperation both national and regional level in Central Asian countries.



Proposed future activities

Macro level: (i) to conduct a gender expertise of water-related laws and normative acts; (ii) to amend water codes to ensure gender responsiveness; (iii) to establish a coordination group on “Gender and Water” in Central Asia with the representatives from the country's Ministries.



Medium level: (i) to expand GWANET; (ii) to prepare special training courses on Gender and Water” and incorporate them into curricula; (iii) to continue support of the GWANET's web-site (fundraising activity); (iv) to provide an “adaptation study” for men and women.

Micro-level: (i) to raise GAD awareness among farmers; (ii) to develop special trainings for farmers (based on Tajik experience); (iii) to develop a course of professional training for women-farmers (different modules).

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