



A Source of Peace – Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia

Sustainable drinking water supply in remote rural areas

Context

Even today, access to potable water is a critical issue for many villages in Kazakhstan. Out of 7,093 rural Kazakh settlements monitored in 2009, 4,493 villages were considered to have middle or low development potential. Unreliable drinking water supply is a key reason for this. The assessment of these villages shows that 267 of them use imported water and 4,114 only have access to water of uncertain quality.

taminated with pesticides and other harmful substances and local medical surgeries have recorded several cases of gastrointestinal disease. Overall, there has been no safe and sustainable water supply here for the past 10 years.

Partners:	Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), local governments (Almaty Oblast Akimat, Koxsu Rayon Akimat), Committee of Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Project term:	Nov. 2009 – Oct. 2010
Budget:	217,200 Euro (out of which local administrations co-finance 20% and the local community 10%)

When one considers over that 40% of the Kazakh population lives in rural areas, the immense scale of the problem becomes apparent. Most of the water system was built in the Soviet era and, since then, has never been properly maintained. With limited budgets, rural

authorities are unable to cover the cost of necessary repairs and rehabilitation works.

This project covers Keneral and Maulenbay villages, both located in the Ili-Balkhash basin, northeast of Almaty city in the Koxsu rayon (administrative district). Each settlement has about 400 inhabitants and 60-80 households. Both have a small school and medical surgery where potable water is supplied in tanks and pans. Local residents source their drinking water from decentralised, household water pumps. Manually installed, these pumps pipe water from six metres underground, however in summer this water becomes con-



Remains of old potable water systems at Keneral (left) and Maulenbay (right) villages

Objective

The primary purpose of the project is to build drinking water supply systems in each village that are financially and institutionally sustainable. To do this, a publicly owned local ‘drinking water cooperative’ is set up to run each village’s system.

The primary objective is to promote more effective water supply practices in local communities across the region. These two villages will, therefore, serve as best practice exemplars for publicly owned drinking water supply systems. Secondary objectives are poverty reduction and community development, which both require sustainable supplies of safe drinking water as a prerequisite.

The target group and beneficiaries of the project are the rural population of Keneral and Maulenbay villages, espe-

cially elderly people, women and children, as well as the local authorities.

Measures

This project is being implemented within the framework of the 'Clean drinking water for rural communities in Kazakhstan' programme of the Regional Environmental Centre in Central Asia (CAREC). At the heart of this programme is the idea to create a platform for local cooperation on local environmental problems. This has already resulted in 10 villages (approximately 11,000 people) securing access to safe drinking water.

The project consists of three components:

- i. Initial stakeholder mobilisation: the residents and local administration of each village are mobilised to set up a 'drinking water cooperative'.
- ii. Capacity building: training seminars and consultations are held for residents and water cooperative members. Topics include both institutional and technical areas including

organisational set up, legal issues, fee calculation and water supply system maintenance.



Handing over the rehabilitated water supply system at Keneral village

- iii. Reconstruction work: the reconstruction of the water supply system is carried out in compliance with Kazakh legal requirements and the local administration provides all necessary technical documentation for the work.

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