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Transboundary Problems in the Chirchik-Akhangaran Basin

The Chirchik-Akhangaran basin (CHAB) is comprised of the following river basins: Chirchik and Akhangaran (Uzbekistan); Chatkal (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan); and, Keles (Kazakhstan).

The area of CHAB is about 22 900 km², including: 15 600 (71.2%) – Uzbekistan; 3 300 (15.1%) – Kazakhstan; and, nearly 3 000 – Kyrgyzstan. The mean annual water resources in CHAB amount to 9.3 km³, of which 7.2 km³ (77%) are formed in the Chirchik basin.

In CHAB, the Chatkal river and the Ugam river are transboundary, and development in the Keles river basin is dependant on transfer of a share of flow from the Chirchik river. Therefore, within the framework of the project Rivertwin², all river basins in CHAB are considered as a single water and environmental entity, being undoubtedly a positive aspect.

The key transboundary problems in CHAB are as follows:

- *lack of agency, which is responsible for water resources management (WRM) in CHAB.*

The project site in Kyrgyzstan is controlled by Djalalabad Basin Water **Administration** (BWA), in Kazakhstan – the Republican Public Enterprise (RPE) “Yugvodkhoz”, in Uzbekistan – the Chirchik-Akhangaran **Basin Administration of Irrigation System (CHABAIS)**. These agencies act separately;

- *lack of coordination in solving the environmental problems in CHAB in general.*

CHAB, as a bio-geographical unit, is an element of mountain system of Western Tien-Shan (WTS); the environmental problems should be solved jointly by countries of WTS;

- *differences in water, land, and environmental laws of CHAB countries.*

Since independence, lawmaking in Central Asian countries has got a centrifugal force that complicated development of regional regulatory documents. Legislation needs to be unified.

- *lack of agreed standards regarding environmental and water quality criteria, sanitary and environmental releases for CHAB rivers.*

Thus, downstream zones of Akhangaran and Keles rivers dry up in low-water years.

- *poor public participation in WRM, etc.*

In order to solve the above mentioned transboundary problems in the project site, it is advisable to establish a Trilateral Commission (TC) represented by Djalalabad BWA, RPE “Yugvodkhoz”, **CHABAIS** and other parties. Authorities of TC could be set on the basis of the European Water Directive³ (EWD), Article 3 that, in turn, would promote EWD in aquatic ecosystem management at basin level.

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² The project site includes CHAB, Neckar river basin (Germany), and Queme basin (Benin, Africa). The project is being implemented by researchers from Europe, Central Asia, and Africa under support of the EU. The University of Hohenheim undertakes the general project coordination. SIC ICWC is responsible for implementation in Central Asia.

³ Directive of the European Parliament and the European Council 2000/60/EC of 23.10.2000.