SDG 6.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation Report

Republic of Uzbekistan

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Background Information

Uzbekistan endorsed the Post-2015 Development Goals during the UN General Assembly held in New York on September 25, 2015 by signing a Resolution "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" - the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

On 20.10.2018 there was released a special **Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (RCM) No. 841 "On measures to implement the National goals and targets in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030".** This Resolution approved 16 national goals in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030 (including SDGs on water management and environmental protection).

On February 21, 2022 Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (RCM) adopted another special Resolution **No.83 "On additional measures to accelerate implementation of the National Goals and Objectives in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030".** This document approved:

- Updated National goals and targets in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030;
- Action Plan for the effective achievement of national goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development for 2022-2026;
- Updated composition of the Coordinating Council for implementation of national goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development until 2030;
- Updated composition of the interdepartmental working group on indicators of national sustainable development goals.

In particular, the following tasks were set:

- to halve the level of poverty in the country by 2030;
- to increase targeting and efficiency of social protection system, the quality of social services, as well as the achievement of full coverage of all those in need of social protection;
- to strengthen food security, improve food rations and promote sustainable agricultural development;

In accordance with this resolution, the Ministry of Water Resources of Uzbekistan (in cooperation with other national authorities) is responsible for following GOALS and tasks:

GOAL 6: Ensuring the availability and sustainable use of water and sanitation for all.

Task 6.1. Ensure universal and equitable access to clean drinking water for all by 2030;
Task 6.3. By 2030, significantly reduce pollution of the aquatic environment from all activities, including land-based activities, and increase the safe reuse of wastewater;
Task 6.4. Significantly increase the efficiency of water use in all sectors of the economy by 2030;

Task 6.5. By 2030, ensure integrated management of water resources at all levels, including transboundary cooperation as necessary;
Task 6.6. By 2030, ensure the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes;
Task 6-b. Support and strengthen the participation of citizens' self-governing bodies in the improvement of water management and sanitation.

GOAL 12. Ensuring the transition to rational models of consumption and production.

Task 12.4. In accordance with the international principles agreed by 2030, in order to achieve environmentally sound use of chemicals and all waste throughout their life cycle and to minimize their negative impact on people and the environment, air, water, etc. and halve its landfall by 2030.

GOAL 15. Protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, promoting their rational use, rational use of forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, and halting the process of biodiversity loss.
Task 15.1. Ensure the conservation, restoration and wise use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in accordance with obligations arising from international agreements;
Task 15.2. Promote sustainable use of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and significantly increase the extent of forest plantations and reforestation;
Task 15.3. By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded lands and soils, including those affected by desertification, drought and flooding, and achieve a neutral balance of land degradation.
Task 15.5. Take serious measures to limit the destruction of the natural habitat of animals, reduce the number of biological species in danger of extinction.
Task 15.8. Take action to prevent the introduction of invasive alien species and seriously reduce their impact on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and take action to prevent the reduction or extinction of priority species.

Ministry of Water Resources of Uzbekistan (in cooperation with Agency of IFAS and CWP-Uzbekistan) organized inter-sectoral consultations with relevant authorities in the country and collect needed data and information for submission to the UN proper indicators on all above-listed Targets, with special focus to the SDG 6.5.1 – IWRM implementation.

Executive Summary

The 2023 consultation process in Uzbekistan began in July. Monitoring progress towards SDG 6.5.1 (degree of implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management) was based on special methodology and analysis documents provided by the IWRM Data Portal which is maintained by UNEP-DHI Centre on Water and Environment, in partnership with UNEP and GWP http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/.

The National Focal Point - the Ministry of Water Resources of Uzbekistan - has appointed the Information, Analytical and Resource Center to be responsible for taking all necessary steps to monitor progress in achieving SDG 6.5.1.

At the first stage, survey questionnaire was filled out by an invited national expert with coordination from the Country Water Partnership and Agency of IFAS (as facilitator of the survey process).

In the second stage, completed draft survey questionnaire was distributed at the end of August 2023 to all stakeholders for additions and comments.

There were involved National water related authorities: according to the current Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Water and Water Use" (No. ZRU-733 dated November 30, 2021), the national bodies responsible for management in water sector of Uzbekistan are:

- Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Local government authorities

Specially authorized government bodies in the field of regulation of water use are the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan (surface waters), the Ministry of Mining and Geology of the Republic of Uzbekistan (groundwater) within their competence.

Other sectoral authorities and departments:

Ministry of Construction, Housing and Communal Services of the Republic of Uzbekistan is a specially authorized government body in the field of drinking water supply and wastewater disposal.

Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan is authorized body in the field of environmental protection (including issues of control of water resource pollution, as well as the protection of aquatic ecosystems).

The Agency of Hydrometeorological Service under the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan is competent authority in the field of hydrometeorological activities (including monitoring and forecasting of water resources).

The Service for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health is competent authority on issues of sanitary and epidemiological safety and maintaining public health (including issues of regulating sanitary standards for water resources).

Ministry of Emergency Situations is authorized state body in matters of protecting population and territories against water-related disasters, as well as making population ready for action in emergency situations.

Subnational water agencies – those are local government authorities (province and district level) which are are responsible for:

- determination of the main directions of use and protection of water resources on its territory;
- ensuring law and order in the field of regulation of use and protection of water resources;
- accounting and assessment of condition of water bodies, control over use and protection of water, compliance with established water intake limits, and keeping records of water use by water users;
- assistance in formation and approval of address lists for introduction of water-saving irrigation technologies, as well as in their implementation;
- ensuring compliance with rights and legitimate interests of water consumer associations, assistance in implementation of measures for repair and restoration of irrigation and collector-drainage networks and water delivery to household plots;
- carrying out measures to preserve and improve the condition of water bodies, prevent and eliminate harmful effects, as well as water pollution, restore objects damaged as a result of accidents, floods, mudflows and natural disasters;
- regulation of other issues provided for by law.

Basin/Aquifer Level Agencies - since 2020, in the system of Ministry of Water Resources there have been functioning 13 basin Administrations of Irrigation Systems (BAIS, in Karakalpakstan - the Ministry of Water Resources), 13 Land Reclamation Expeditions (LRE) under BAISes, 49 Administrations of irrigation systems (AIS), 156 district irrigation departments (RID), 13 departments of pumping stations and energy under BAIS and other subordinated organizations.

Water consumer associations, other non-governmental non-profit organizations, in accordance with their charters, and citizens provide assistance to government bodies in implementing measures for rational use and protection of water and water bodies. When carrying out these activities, government bodies may take into account proposals from water consumer associations, other non-governmental non-profit organizations, as well as citizens.

Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Council of Farmers, Dekhkan Farms and Household Lands of Uzbekistan were involved too.

The third stage was a discussion at the Round Table of stakeholders to develop consensus on assessing progress in the implementation of IWRM in Uzbekistan for 2023. The round table was held on September 22, 2023 in Tashkent (the agenda of the round table and list of participants are given in annexes).

There was no significant disagreement on the survey presented during the consultation meeting. Some participants provided further clarification and additional information on a number of survey items. Particular comments were made by some sectoral authorities (agriculture, ecology, emergency) on the national policy and governance of water management. Some specific discussion was about water governance issues at the subnational level.

The Ministry of Water Resources of Uzbekistan specifically thanks the expert (Paul Glennie) from the UNEP-DHI Centre on Water and Environment, who provided comments on the preliminary draft of survey.

It is important to note that Uzbekistan officially reported to the UNEP in 2017 to set the baseline for SDG 6.5.1. The 2017 baseline survey and second survey in 2020 were used to compare data and to see progress up to 2023. The main outcome from recent survey 2023 showed that there is some progress in all of four components of IWRM, and total score changed from 48 in 2020 to 52 in 2023 (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1. Summary of the Survey Instrument for Uzbekistan on SDG indicator 6.5.1 "Degree of implementation of integrated water resources management" 2017 - 2023

№№	Questions of the Survey Instrument	2017	2020	2023	Changes
Part 1	**ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**				
1.1	**Status of policies, laws and plans to support IWRM at the national level:**				
1.1a	National water resources policy, or similar	40	60	70	+10
1.1b	National water resources law(s)	30	30	40	+10
1.1.c	National integrated water resources management (IWRM) plans, or similar	30	30	40	+10
1.2	**Status of policies, laws and plans to support IWRM at other levels:**				
1.2a	Sub-national water resources policies or similar	30	40	40	-
1.2b	Basin/aquifer management plans or similar, based on IWRM	30	30	40	+10
1.2c	Arrangements for transboundary water management	70	70	70	-
1.2d	Sub-national water resources regulations (laws, decrees, ordinances or similar)	Was not assessed	30	40	+10
Total Part 1		**38,3**	**41**	**49**	**+8**
Part 2	**INSTITUTIONS AND PARTICIPATION**				
2.1	**Status of institutions for IWRM implementation at the national level:**				
2.1a	National government authorities for leading IWRM implementation	60	60	70	+10
2.1b	Coordination between national government authorities representing different sectors	60	60	70	+10
2.1c	Public participation in water resources, policy, planning and management at national level	50	50	60	+10
2.1d	Private sector participation in water resources development, management and use	40	40	50	+10
2.1e	Developing IWRM capacity	60	60	60	-
2.1f	National gender-related water management objectives	40	Assessment excluded		
2.2	**Status of institutions for IWRM implementation at other levels:**				
2.2a	Basin/aquifer level organizations for leading implementation of IWRM	60	60	60	-
2.2b	Public participation in water resources, policy, planning and management at the local level	60	60	60	-
2.2c	Participation of vulnerable groups in water resources planning and management	40	40	40	-
2.2d	Gender included in laws/plans or similar within water resources management	40	40	50	+10
2.2e	Organizational framework for transboundary water management	70	70	70	-
2.2f	Sub-national authorities for leading IWRM implementation	Was not assessed	40	40	-

№№	Questions of the Survey Instrument	2017	2020	2023	Changes
Total Part 2		52,7	53	57	+4
Part 3	MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTS				
3.1	Status of management instruments to support IWRM implementation at the national level:				
3.1a	National monitoring of water availability (incl. surface and/or groundwater)	70	70	70	-
3.1b	Sustainable and efficient water use management at the national level (incl. surface and/or groundwater)	60	60	60	-
3.1c	Pollution control from the national level	50	50	60	+10
3.1d	Management of water-related ecosystems from the national level	50	60	60	-
3.1e	Management instruments to reduce impacts of water-related disasters - national level	60	70	70	-
3.2	Status of management instruments to support IWRM implementation at other levels:				
3.2a	Basin management instruments	50	60	60	-
3.2b	Aquifer management instruments	60	60	60	-
3.2c	Data and information sharing within countries at all levels	50	60	70	+10
3.2d	Transboundary data and information sharing between countries	50	50	50	-
Total Part 3		55,6	60	62	+2
Part 4	FINANCING				
4.1	Status of financing for water resources development and management at the national level:				
4.1a	National budget for water resources infrastructure (investment and recurrent costs)	50	50	50	-
4.1b	National budget for IWRM elements (investments and recurrent costs)	30	30	30	-
4.2	Status of financing for water resources development and management at other levels:				
4.2a	Sub-national or basin budgets for water resources infrastructure (investment and recurrent costs)	30	40	40	-
4.2b	Revenues raised for IWRM elements	20	30	30	-
4.2c	Financing for transboundary cooperation	40	50	50	-
4.2d	Sub-national or basin budgets for IWRM elements (investment and recurrent costs)	Was not assessed	20	30	+10
Total Part 4		34	37	38	+1
TOTAL SUMMARY SCORE		45	48	52	+4

Enough big progress was observed in component “Enabling environment for IWRM” (+8) as well as the Government of Uzbekistan conducted huge reforms in all sectors of economy during last three years. Particularly, Ministry of Water Resources based on the Concept for the Development of the Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030, which was approved by Presidential Decree in July 2020 implemented the first three years Water Strategy (2021 - 2023).

Some progress was observed in component “Institutions and participation” (+4). In spite of great institutional changes in the water sector - the Ministry of Water Resources has been created during last 5 years, huge reforms of the internal structure of the Ministry of Water Management - BAISes and other grassroot organizations have experienced many changes in forms and functional responsibilities. But our observation shows that there is still not proper understanding of IWRM by majority of decision makers in Uzbekistan, especially at subnational lever.

Some progress was observed in component “Management Instruments” (+2) due to the constant attention of the Ministry of Water Resources to monitoring water resources and

their use, water conservation, improving the technical level of management and operation and other tools.

Very small progress was observed in component "Financing" (+1), but system of financing the water sector in Uzbekistan still lacks a proper mechanism to support IWRM components as it is demanded.

Table 2. Final score of the SDG indicator 6.5.1 in Uzbekistan
"Degree of implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management " 2017 - 2023

Section	Average Scores		
	2017	2020	2023
Section 1 Enabling environment	38,3	41	**49**
Section 2 Institutions and participation	52,7	53	**57**
Section 3 Management instruments	55,6	60	**62**
Section 4 Financing	34,0	37	**38**
Indicator 6.5.1 Score	45,15	**48**	**52**

The full completed survey instrument for 2023 can be found in a separate document (e.g. filename: "Uzbekistan_651_2023_RUS_Final_verF_29092023.docx").

1. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 1: 'Enabling Environment'

During stakeholders round table there were listed the principal governmental regulation addressing water sector.

In July 2020, Ministry of Water Resources presented the Concept for development of water sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030. The concept was approved by Presidential Decree No. UP-6024 of July 10, 2020. Based on this, "Strategy for water resources management and development of irrigation sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021–2023" was developed, which was also approved by Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-5005 dated February 24, 2021. These documents define main directions of development of the republic's water management complex until 2030, and include a number of infrastructural, political, institutional measures and capacity-building activities, covering sustainable water resources management and improvement of the republic's irrigation sector.

On April 6, 2021, by Presidential Decree UP-6200 and Presidential Decree PP-5055, the final structure of the Ministry of Water Resources was approved - management of irrigation systems - elements of hydrographic principle of IWRM - returned to the institutional structure. Also, by this resolution, the Ministry was again authorized to be the governmental body responsible for formation of the National Water Balance.

By Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 28, 2022 No. UP-60, Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 was approved, which takes into account target indicators of the country's sustainable development. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated February 21, 2022 No. 83 "On additional measures to accelerate the implementation of National goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development for the period until 2030" approved an updated composition of expert groups for the implementation of SDGs using intersectoral and integration approaches.

On March 1, 2022, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-145 "On measures to improve water resources management and regulate relationships between water consumers at the grassroots level" was adopted. The purpose of this document was to improve efficiency of water resource management, full accounting and reporting on them, improve relations between water consumers, and also widely involve private sector in these processes.

In December 2022, by order of Minister of Water Resources, an Interdepartmental Working Group was created with participation of local experts and international consultants and work began on development of "Strategy for water resources management and development of irrigation sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2024–2026."

By Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP 158 dated September 11, 2023, Strategy "Uzbekistan -2030" was approved. The strategy was developed based on experience gained during process of implementing Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan since January 28, 2022, as well as results of public discussion of its progress. The Uzbekistan 2030 strategy reflects following main ideas:

- Achievement the ranks of upper-middle-income countries through sustainable economic development;
- Creation of a system of education, medicine and social protection that fully meets needs of the people and international standards;
- Creation of favorable environmental conditions for population;
- Building a fair and modern state serving people;
- Guaranteed provision of sovereignty and security of the country.

For the first time in history of modern Uzbekistan, a special section (III) "Conservation of water resources and environmental protection" was included in the National development strategy. Thus, in section 3.1 "Reforms to save water resources," the task is set by 2030: to ensure an increase in water use efficiency by 25 percent, bringing the total area of land covered by water-saving technologies for irrigating crops up to 2 million hectares, including drip irrigation technologies – up to 600 thousand hectares.

Thus, in three years (since the last assessment of IWRM progress in 2020), significant changes in national water resources policy have occurred in Uzbekistan.

2. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 2: 'Institutions and Participation'

Participants of stakeholders roundtable observed that according to the current Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Water and Water Use" (No. ZRU-733 dated November 30, 2021), national bodies responsible for management in water sector of Uzbekistan are:

- Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Local government authorities

Specially authorized government bodies in the field of regulation of water use are Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan (surface waters), Ministry of Mining and Geology of the Republic of Uzbekistan (groundwater) within their competence.

The organizational structure of the Ministry of Water Resources and its lower bodies was approved by Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 6200 "On measures to further improve system of public administration and control in field of use of water resources, as well as ensuring safety of water facilities" and Presidential Decree No. 5055 of April 6 2021. These documents define status, main tasks, functions, rights and organizational basis of the activities of Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The main tasks and areas of activity of Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- implementation of a unified policy in the field of water resources management, formation of accounting, reporting and water balance, as well as coordination of activities of government bodies and other organizations in field of rational use and protection of water resources, prevention and elimination of negative impact of water;

- creating conditions to meet continuously growing demand for water of population of the republic, economic sectors and environment, ensuring the efficient use of water resources;
- attracting qualified foreign experts and consulting organizations to the high-quality organization of work on modernization, development and construction of water management facilities, development of regulations, as well as work on design and examination of water management facilities with a high level of safety;
- prioritization and implementation of each project by conducting an in-depth analysis of economic efficiency and safety of water management facilities based on specific indicators and criteria;
- scientific and technical support for work on examination and implementation of projects for construction and reconstruction of water management facilities;
- ensuring safety and reliable operation of reservoirs, flood reservoirs and other water management facilities;
- taking measures to improve reclamation condition and ensure sustainability of irrigated lands;
- widespread use of resource-saving technologies, modern building materials and advanced foreign experience in field of water management;
- introduction of digital technologies in management of water facilities, maintaining water records and reporting, as well as the formation of an appropriate database;
- ensuring transparency in accounting for water resources and electricity consumption, as well as increasing their efficiency;
- introduction of the principles of a market economy, mechanisms of public-private partnership and outsourcing in the water sector;
- organizing advanced training for water management specialists on a systematic basis, strengthening the integration of educational and research institutions with water management organizations, organizing the systematic implementation of scientific and technological achievements in practice;
- development of interstate relations on the management and use of transboundary water resources, attracting foreign investment and technical assistance, as well as taking active participation in the activities of international organizations in the field of water management.

At the grassroots level, water user associations with status of non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), farmers, dehkan farms, citizens, other water users and water consumers are involved in water resource management. All issues at this level are regulated by Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan PP-145 “On measures to improve water resources management and regulate relationships between water consumers at the lower level” dated March 1, 2022.

It should be noted here that by Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-14 “On priority organizational measures to effectively establish activities of republican executive bodies” dated January 25, 2023, transformation of 27 ministries in Uzbekistan is being carried out. Thus, by Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-116 “On measures for effective organization of public administration in field of mining and geology within the framework of administrative reforms” dated July 27, 2023, the State Committee for Geology

was transformed into Ministry of Mining Industry and Geology of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This decree approved:

- Organizational structure of the Ministry of Mines and Geology;
- Program for the reorganization of institutions in system of the Ministry of Mining and Geology;
- Organizational structure of the Inspectorate for Control of Mining, Geological and Industrial Safety;
- The program for development of the mineral resource base in 2023-2025 and its targets;
- List of functions of Ministry of Mines and Geology transferred to the private sector;
- "Road map" to deepen reforms in the field of mining and geology, and transform the system's activities;
- Composition of the State Commission for Mineral Reserves under the Ministry of Mining and Geology;
- Priority areas of activity of the Ministry of Mining and Geology.

The Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services of the Republic of Uzbekistan is a specially authorized government body in the field of drinking water supply and wastewater disposal. Its activities on these issues are regulated by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. ZRU-784 “On drinking water supply and wastewater disposal,” which entered into force on July 22, 2022. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-257 “On additional measures to increase the level of provision of the population with drinking water supply and sewerage services” dated May 24, 2022, approved the program and targets in this area until 2026.

The Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the authorized body in the field of environmental protection (including issues of control of water resource pollution, as well as the protection of aquatic ecosystems). The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 343 “On further improvement of system for assessing the level of environmental pollution” dated 06/03/2021. The document was developed with aim of improving monitoring of the natural environment, predicting the level of its pollution, providing state environmental control with constant information, monitoring the condition of sources pollution and environmental impact. The resolution instructed to ensure integration of the departmental electronic information database on state monitoring of natural environment into the Unified Geoinformation Database. The Environmental Monitoring Program in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021–2025 has been approved.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-81 “On measures to transform the sphere of ecology and environmental protection and the organization of activities of the authorized state body” dated May 31, 2023 and the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-171 “On measures for the effective organization of activities Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change" dated 05/31/2023 approved:

- Priority areas of activity of the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change;
- Organizational structure of the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change;
- "Road map" to deepen reforms in the field of ecology and environmental protection and transform the activities of the system;
- Plan for the development of regulations in the areas of ecology, environmental protection, forestry and hydrometeorology.

The Agency of Hydrometeorological Service under the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the competent authority in the field of hydrometeorological activities (including monitoring and forecasting of water resources).

The Service for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health is the competent authority on issues of sanitary and epidemiological safety and maintaining public health (including issues of regulating sanitary standards for water resources).

From the point of view of protecting the population and territories from emergency situations related to water, in recent years, special attention has been paid to the issues of carrying out fundamental reforms in the system of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), organizing measures to protect the population and territories from emergency situations, as well as preparing the population for actions in emergency situations. In this direction, in 2020-2023, two Decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 12 resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, more than 40 departmental and interdepartmental regulatory documents were adopted, during which important directions for improving the system were identified and implemented. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 299 "On measures to implement the "Sendai Framework Program for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030" in the Republic of Uzbekistan" dated April 12, 2019 was adopted. The resolution approved:

- Strategy for achieving the goals of the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015 - 2030" in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- National action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for achieving the goals of the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015 - 2030" in the Republic of Uzbekistan for period 2019 - 2030.

Thus, the main conclution of stakeholders round table was that degree of availability of authorized government bodies to guide implementation of IWRM can be assessed as moderately high.

3. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 3: 'Management Instruments'

Participants of stakeholders roundtable observed the key tools, which are reflecting efficiency of IWRM practical implementation.

First tool is National monitoring of water availability (includes surface and/or groundwater). There was observed that as part of implementation of "Strategy for water resources

management and development of irrigation sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021–2023," work was carried out to improve forecasting and accounting system and formation of databases of water resources and ensure its transparency. In particular, interdepartmental cooperation and real-time data exchange are supported. The Ministry of Water Resources is developing a unified standard for classification and identification of water resources for objects of the State Water Cadastre.

Second, there were observed procedures for intake of water resources, accounting and reporting for water use and water consumption. Those tools are reflected in Regulations "On the procedure for water use and water consumption in the Republic of Uzbekistan" (entered into force on April 1, 2013), approved by Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (dated March 19, 2013). No. 82), according to which, in particular:

- Withdrawal of water resources for water use and water consumption is carried out only if there is an agreement on water use and water consumption, duly registered, in agreement with the service operating organization.
- Water intake is carried out only upon written requests from water users and water consumers (except for cases of water intake from the public water supply system, as well as underground reservoirs) according to their readiness for water use and water consumption, based on the water use and water consumption plan, within the established water intake limit.
- The declared amount of water resources for withdrawal from the source should not exceed approved water withdrawal limit.
- Places where water resources are taken must be equipped with appropriate means of regulation and accounting.
- Regulatory and accounting means must be constantly maintained in good working order.
- In order to ensure state accounting of waters and their use, maintaining the Unified State Water Fund with creation of a unified water balance information system, systematic accounting and reporting of water use and water consumption and their monitoring are established in accordance with the established procedure.
- The procedure for collection, accounting and reporting of water resources during water use and water consumption from the public water supply system is established by the Ministry of Housing and Communal Services.
- All special water users and water consumers are required to keep records and reports, provide information on water use and water consumption, as well as on water disposal in accordance with the procedure established by law.

The draft "Water Code" provides for a special article "State regulation of use of water and water bodies and their protection." This means that in the near future procedure for collecting water resources, maintaining records and reporting on water use and water consumption will be revised based on actual realities.

The third set of tools are about water pollution regulations. In this respect the participants of roundtable observed that Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-5863 dated October 30, 2019 approved "Concept of environmental protection of the Republic of

Uzbekistan for the period until 2030." On June 3, 2021, Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 343 "On further improvement of system for assessing the level of environmental pollution." In accordance with those there were starged activities aiming to improving monitoring of the natural environment, predicting the level of its pollution, providing state environmental control with constant information, monitoring the state of pollution sources and impact on the environment.

The State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection (from May 1, 2023 - the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan) has created a unified geoinformation database of the state environmental monitoring system. There were started works to ensure integration of inter-sectoral electronic information database on state monitoring of natural environment into the Unified Geoinformation Database. Also, Environmental Monitoring Program in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021–2025 was approved.

Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, together with Ministry of Construction, Housing and Communal Services, is working to improve monitoring of water intakes (to avoid excessive withdrawal of runoff), and is creating a network of laboratories to monitor the quality indicators of water taken from water bodies. A program for the development of technologies for wastewater treatment and recycling has also been launched.

The Service for Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health regularly and universally monitors the compliance of the water used with the "Sanitary Rules and Norms, Hygienic Standards" of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In 2015, "Hygienic and anti-epidemic requirements for protection of water in reservoirs on territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan" were approved (SanPiN RUz No. 0318-15).

Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 484 dated June 11, 2019 approved strategy for conservation of biological diversity in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2019-2028.

The Ecological Party of Uzbekistan, created in 2019, carries out public monitoring of implementation of all laws and regulations in the field of environmental protection, including water management issues.

The fourth set of tools are under responsibility of Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which has created a Unified system for monitoring, exchanging information and forecasting emergency situations of a natural, man-made and environmental nature. The functioning of the unified system is carried out in accordance with Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 171 "On measures for the effective organization of the activities of the state system of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the prevention of emergency situations and actions in such situations" dated April 29, 2023. Tasks of unified system:

- ensuring continuous and automated exchange of information on monitoring and forecasting emergency situations, as well as their occurrence and consequences;
- advance forecasting of the nature and extent of possible development of dangerous natural and man-made processes and events leading to emergency situations is carried out.

The State Emergency Service unites more than 40 ministries and departments of the republic, where Ministry of Emergency Situations, as a coordinator, takes an active part in this process and has a coordinating role in developing and implementing goals, ensuring the protection of population and territories from emergency situations.

The round table participants also discussed management tools at the level of groundwater aquifers and instruments for the exchange of data and information within the country at all levels.

The basic principles of international cooperation in field of management, use and protection of water resources, which are determined by the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, which is based on principles of adherence to international law, were also discussed. Uzbekistan is open to data exchange at the transboundary level, carried out within the framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and the Interstate Coordination Water Commission. Within the framework of IFAS and ICWC, exchange of information is stipulated in relevant agreements. However, over past three years (after 2020), the situation with the information exchange process has not improved - Uzbekistan's neighbors - Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan - still do not show interest in the openness of water information. Key information on transboundary aspects is presented in the ICWC protocols and bulletins periodically published on the CAWATER-info portal (http://www.icwc-aral.uz)

4. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 4: 'Financing'

Financing of water sector (irrigation and land reclamation) in the last three years has been carried out on the basis of the "Strategy for water resources management and development of irrigation sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021–2023," which was approved by Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-5005 dated 02.24.2021. In 2022, 8,105 billion soums (about 700 million US dollars) were allocated from the state budget to Ministry of Water Resources, of which 6,399 billion soums (79%) were spent on operation. Of this cost, payment for electricity amounted to 4,684 billion soums (73% of total operating costs). In addition, 1,213 billion soums were allocated for construction and reconstruction of facilities, as well as 384 billion soums for repair of reclamation facilities. In addition to budget funds, the Ministry of Water Resources has investments from international investors in the amount (for 2021-2023) of 696.7 million US dollars.

Today, it is possible to evaluate volume of financing to water infrastructure from the state budget at level of 80% of the amount actually required for its sustainable functioning.

Thus, consultation process did the following conclusion - system of financing the water sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan still lacks a proper mechanism for economic relations between water management organizations and water users, there is no national "water market" as the

main lever for redistribution of water resources from low-efficient water users to highly efficient ones. There is no mechanism of general and personal interest in water saving among water consumers and water workers. The main expenses for delivery of water for agricultural producers are covered from the state budget. Payments by agricultural producers for water delivery services are not directly linked to volume of water consumption. Their size is insufficient to stimulate productive and rational water use.

5. Next steps

Based on the results of consultations, specific recommendations were proposed for further steps in each of the 4 areas of IWRM for the next three years - 2024 -2026 (which will be tied to the key priority areas of water sector development strategy). Implementation of measures to achieve goals of those four directions are dispersed in different priority areas of work within framework of the country's water sector development strategy.

Particular emphasis should be placed on increasing funding for implementation of IWRM principles. The process of adopting Water Code should be accelerated, which proposes the following mechanisms for mobilizing financial resources into water sector: Water delivery services and other services related to operation and maintenance of water facilities are provided on a paid basis. The water delivery fee is intended to cover costs of water supplier, including capital, operating and administrative costs, cost of future upgrades to water delivery infrastructure, and to ensure profitability of water supplier. It is possible to partially subsidize payment for water delivery from the state budget, as well as through a cross-subsidization mechanisms.

Basic payment rates for water delivery services and other water management services should be approved by Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan in agreement with Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, taking into account:

- need to stimulate water conservation and tie tariffs to volumes of water delivered;
- degree of water scarcity in a given hydrographic zone;
- differences in costs for water delivery for water users of different territories and equalization of tariffs for water users within the same territory;
- priorities of the state's socio-economic policy.

Prepared draft of “Strategy for water resources management and development of irrigation sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2024–2026” provides an action plan to stimulate technical assistance to components of IWRM from international financial institutions and foreign countries, and also other donors. A gradual increase in the budget and its items is forseen for purposes of operation and development of infrastructure, as well as for the implementation of IWRM components. Specific support should be done for subnational level where target is to increase funding for the lower level of water management hierarchy by 25-30%.

There was expressed hope that thanks to recommended measures, Uzbekistan in terms of implementation of IWRM principles can reach a moderately high level (60) by 2026, and set a goal by 2030 to reach a high level of implementation of IWRM principles - no lower than 68-70 points.

It worth to mention that in May 2023 Uzbekistan presented the second VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN 2023 on the implementation of national goals and objectives of sustainable development in Uzbekistan until 2030.

There were outlined further steps to support implementation of IWRM:

- introduction of market principles, improvement of mechanisms for regulation and financing of water management;
- improvement of water policy and water resources management mechanisms;
- modernization of infrastructure and development of water services;
- development of human resources, scientific and innovative potential of the water sector;
- implementation of developed Strategies and Concepts to ensure environmental sustainability;
- conservation and rational use of water resources for sustainable development, ensuring their accessibility and developing sanitation;
- modernization of infrastructure and development of water services sector, including through public-private partnerships.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: List of participants

The Roundtable participants 22 September 2023

Name	Organisation	Position	Email address
Zokir Ishpulatov	Information-Analytical and Resources Centre of the Ministry of Water Resources (IARC of the MWR) of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Director	+998 97 703-62-45 iarc@minwater.uz
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Olga Mirshina	Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Chief Specialist	+998 71 276-75-92
Saidrasul Sanginov	Executive Committee of the Central Kengash of the Eco-movement of Uzbekistan	Deputy Chairman	+998 71 209-85-60 saidrasul2011@mail.ru
Abdulkhakim Salakhiddinov	National Research University "TIIAME"	Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Department of Ecology and WRM	+998 71 202-55-96 pepiwm@mail.ru
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Albina Akhmedova	Center for Hydrometeorological Service under MEEPCC of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzhydromet)	Senior Specialist	+998 71 234-23-41 uzhymet@meteo.uz

Name	Organisation	Position	Email address
Vadim Sokolov	Agency of International Fund for saving the Aral Sea	Director	+998 55 503-13-56 vadim_sokol@mail.ru
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Ildar Gayfulin	Agency of International Fund for saving the Aral Sea	IT Specialist	+998 55 503-13-56 ille76@mail.ru
Doniyor Toirov	Agency of International Fund for saving the Aral Sea	Specialist	+998 55 503-13-56 mr.odilovich@mail.ru
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Natalya Shulepina	Eco-information network SREDA.UZ	Head	shulepina@bk.ru

Other stakeholders engaged (not in workshops)

Name	Organization/Position	Email address	Summary of inputs provided
Anastasiya Degtyareva	Consultant from SIC ICWC	nastya_sicicwc@yahoo.com	Draft of full Survey
Ibragim Domuladjanov	NGO "Clean Fergana"	+998 97 2142497	Contribution to Section 2, Public participation
Yusup Kamalov	Academy of Science of Karakalpakstan	yusupkamalov@yahoo.com	Contribution to Section 3, Tools for ecosystems

Consultations on policy issues in the field of monitoring and protection of the environment, natural resource management were held with experts from the following structures of the Parliament of Uzbekistan:

Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis https://parliament.gov.uz/ru/structure/committee/1762
Ecological Party of Uzbekistan https://ecouz.uz

On issues of water resources and water policy, agricultural and land policy :

Committee on Agrarian and Water Issues of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis https://parliament.gov.uz/ru/structure/committee/17

On policy issues in the field of energy efficiency, development of renewable energy sources and energy security:

Committee on Industry, Construction and Trade of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis https://parliament.gov.uz/ru/structure/committee/22

Annex 2: Agenda

Agenda of the Stakeholders Roundtable
Progress Assessment of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 6.5.1
"Implementation of IWRM" in the Republic of Uzbekistan 2023

Meeting Hall of the IARC under the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Tashkent 22 September 2023

11:00 – 11:15	Registration of participants
11:15 – 11:45	Introduction: • Vadim Sokolov (Moderator), Methodological consultant, Head of the IFAS Agency in Uzbekistan Greetings: • Zokir Ishpulatov, Director of the Information, Analytical and Resource Center under the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan • Adham Tulaganov, Coordinator of the NVP of Uzbekistan Presentation of participants. Discussion and adoption of the agenda.
11:45 – 12:00	**Vadim Sokolov (Moderator), Head of the IFAS Agency in Uzbekistan** Introduction to the goals and objectives of the data collection and reporting process for SDG indicator 6.5.1 in 2023
Session 1. Enabling Environment for IWRM	
12:00 – 12:30	**Vadim Sokolov (Moderator)** Presentation of the prepared questionnaire - questionnaire on the indicator 6.5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "the degree of implementation of integrated water resources management in Uzbekistan" at the level of 2023[1]
12:30 – 13:00	Stakeholders Discussion: "State of the policy, legislation and plans for IWRM at the national and other levels in Uzbekistan"
13:00 – 14:30	Break for Lunch
Session 2. Institutions and Participation	
14:30 – 15:00	Discussion by stakeholders: “State of institutions for IWRM implementation. Key players in Uzbekistan”
Session 3. Management Tools	
15:00 – 15:30	Discussion by stakeholders: "Status of mechanisms and tools for introduction of IWRM at the national and other levels in Uzbekistan"
Session 4. Finance	
15:30 – 16:00	Discussion by stakeholders: "Status of funding for development and implementation of IWRM at the national and other levels in Uzbekistan"
16:00 – 16:30	Tea and coffee break
16:30 – 17:00	Vadim Sokolov (Moderator), Methodological consultant, Head of the IFAS Agency in Uzbekistan • Next Steps for IWRM and Monitoring Goal 6.5.1 • Summing up and closing Roundtable discussions

[1] The draft completed Survey Instrument "Progress on SDG 6.5.1 - IWRM in Uzbekistan in 2023" was sent by the Ministry of Water Resources of Uzbekistan to all stakeholders 20 days before the round table for the preparation of comments, remarks and considerations.

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments (Dr. Vadim Sokolov, Head of Agency of IFAS and Chair of TEC GWP CACENA)

As it was stated during beginning of 2023 survey process - in July 2020, the Ministry of Water Resources presented the Concept for the development of the water sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030. The concept was approved by Presidential Decree No. UP-6024 of July 10, 2020. Based on this, the "Strategy for water resources management and development of the irrigation sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021–2023" was developed, which was also approved by Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-5005 dated February 24, 2021.

Exactly those two principal governmental documents were the basis for our survey in 2023. Our analyses showed that that the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the Strategy 2021-2023 are presented very vaguely - the main components of IWRM are not indicated, there are no specifications for implementation of IWRM at the subnational level - within basins or individual regions and there are many other gaps. In transboundary river basins, strong infrastructural interdependence has developed, which is superimposed by the factor of inconsistency of national priorities regarding IWRM principles at the regional level. Existing agreements and understandings are not always fulfilled by the parties or are partially observed.

The legislative framework of Uzbekistan regulating water management issues was adopted in 1993, to which additions were constantly made. The final version of the Law (No. ZRU-733) was approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on November 30, 2021. However, it does not have a clear understanding and regulation of IWRM principles. Currently, work is underway to develop the Water Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, where principles of IWRM are expected to be spelled out more clearly.

As an analysis of the progress assessment of IWRM implementation in Uzbekistan conducted during 2023 shows, all stakeholders (and most importantly, the Ministry of Water Resources as the national coordinator of process) need to rethink their policies, plans and regulation (legal and financial) in relation to IWRM components. All this should be properly reflected when developing the next stage of the Water Strategy 2024-2026. Therefore, during consultation round table, which was held in September 2023 we advised to set intermediate goals for IWRM at the level of 2025 - 2027, so that by 2030 we can confidently reach a high level of their practical implementation in Uzbekistan.

An action program for institutional reforms inside the new Strategy 2024-2026 should be developed and expanded in light of main components of IWRM (four). It can be recommended to deepen the institutional structure of the water sector in Uzbekistan in order to separate functions - some bodies should be responsible for water supply services (Water Resources Ministry and BAISes), others should be responsible for water use (District irrigation departments, water user associations and water consumer departments). The combination of these functions in one hand is ineffective from point of view of economic mechanisms and incentives for minimizing unproductive water losses.

Very important that subnational water authorities (basin irrigation authorities - BAISes) responsible for delivering water to end users should work on a hydrographic basis to avoid administrative pressure from local authorities. But, institutional organizations responsible for water use (District irrigation departments, agricultural clusters, water consumers themselves) operate on basis of the territorial-administrative principle, since economic and socio-social activities are structured in Uzbekistan within administrative boundaries and coordinated by local territorial authorities (Khokimiyats).

The decision-making system for water resources management (as opposed to the water management process) should be organized on a bottom-up basis from level of water consumers to National level of the Ministry of Water Resources. This will minimize professional/industry hydro-egoizm, democratize entire process and involve key stakeholders into decision-making.

Financial investment (public and private) in infrastructure is insufficient without adequate (see above) institutional reforms. Therefore, part of the funds should be used to strengthen institutional capacity, as well as increase IWRM capacity.

Institutional changes are ineffective without improving IWRM tools, in particular without developing financial mechanisms to ensure the financial viability of institutional structures (especially at the grassroots level where water-based products are produced).

During reforms, as well as in daily activities in water sector of Uzbekistan, main focus should not be on the actions themselves, but on the results to which these actions will lead. Any institutional changes should improve water management process and therefore be measured by proper indicators.

Annex 4: Photos

SDG 6.5.1 National Focal point: Zokir Ishpulatov – Director of the Information – Analytical and Resources Centre of the Ministry of Water Resources (from 1 November 2023 Mr. Zokir Ishpulatov was appointed to work in Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan). There is new person, who replace Mr. Ishpulatov - **Mr. Ilhom Juraev – new Director of the Information – Analytical and Resources Centre of the Ministry of Water Resources, who will continue play role of SDG 6.5.1 National Focal point**

Principal SDG 6.5.1 Consultation Facilitator 2023: Dr. Vadim Sokolov, Head of Agency of IFAS gave interview to the National TV channel Dunyo Boylab about stakeholders consultations on SDG 6.5.1. (IWRM implementation) progress in Uzbekistan

Some working moments of the Stakeholders Round table on 22 September 2023

Mr. Saidrasul Sanginov - Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Central Council of the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan - delivered suggestions for increasing public participation in water management, environmental protection and public health.