



CEP E-Bulletin



JAN 2005
No. CEP-B-05/1
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Our Programme Since We Last Met:

CEP Matched Small Grants Orientation Meeting, 22 nd & 23 rd December, Baku

Grants were awarded at the fourth round of the CEP Small Grants Programme (MSGP) to 6 projects from five littoral countries (2 projects from Turkmenistan and 1 from each of the other Caspian littoral countries). During an orientation meeting in Baku on 22nd and 23rd of December 2004, the grantees signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and introduced their projects to one another. Also they were briefed on the main project implementation procedures and management arrangements. All the awarded projects will commence their activities in January 2005. Moreover, orientation meetings for the 8 awarded Micro Environmental Grants (Azerbaijan , I.R. Iran, Russia and Turkmenistan , each with 2 projects) were conducted at national level in each littoral country in December. During these meetings the MOAs were signed by the grantees and they were briefed on the implementation and management arrangements of MEG projects. All the MEG awarded projects will also start their activities in January 2005.



CAREC Grants Evaluation Meeting, Moscow , 23rd – 24th December

CAREC held the Grants Evaluation Meeting in Moscow on 23 rd and 24 th of December. The meeting was held under the umbrella of EU/TACIS support for the CEP. Number of grants were reviewed and approved in this evaluation meeting.

Signing of Inter-agency Agreement

CEP-SAP Project signed an inter-agency agreement with IAEA to cooperate on pollution monitoring in the Caspian.

Annual Meeting of the Regional Seas Programmes, Istanbul

CEP-SAP Project presented CEP in the Annual Meeting of the Regional Seas Programmes held in Istanbul on November 29 th through December 2 nd 2004. During the meeting, the RS strategy was reviewed and approved by the Regional Seas Programmes.

Upcommings:

LBS Protocol Meeting, Ashgabat, 24 th -25 th January 2005

The First Land Based Sources (LBS) Protocol Meeting will be held in Ashgabat on 24 th -25 th of January 2005. In this meeting, the technical scope of a LBS Protocol to the Framework Caspian Convention will be discussed. The representatives of the five Caspian littoral countries will participate in this gathering that will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries and EU/TACIS.

2nd Pollution Regional Advisory Group Meeting, Tehran , 6 th - 7 th February 2005

The second meeting of the Interim Caspian Pollution Regional Advisory Group (PRAG) will be held in Tehran on February 6/7, 2005. The main objectives of the meeting are to discuss the assessment of the impact of key transboundary contaminants in water and sediments in Caspian Sea and to develop a Work Plan for further surveys of sediments and water of the Caspian Sea by conducting of a Scientific Sea Cruise in summer 2005.

PPS Regional Meeting, Tehran , 27 th – 28 th February 2005

A two days Public Participation Strategy workshop will be organized on 27-28 February 2005 in PCU-Tehran. The objective of the workshop is to share the PPS document with the stakeholders to obtain the views and ideas and finalize the document for implementation.

POPS Regional Meeting, Tehran , 6 th - 8 th March 2005

The Third meeting on the Interim Pollution Regional Advisory Group (PRAG) will be held in Tehran on 6 th – 8 th March 2005. The meeting will discuss the preparation of a Regional Action Plan for persistent organic pollutants and a special management plan in agricultural sector for mitigation and control of Chlorinated Agricultural Pesticides through the implementation of pilot projects in some of the Caspian littoral countries.

General NEWS:

Price of Caviar Could be the Extinction of Sturgeon

December 07, 2004 - (AFP): Caviar lovers will find the delicacy even more expensive than usual this Christmas, but there are warnings that it may not be available at all for much longer. The Caspian Sea , the world's largest inland body of water has been the source of 90 percent of caviar found on the international market. But sturgeon stocks here have been falling dramatically. "Fifteen years ago the boat would be filled to the brim after just an afternoon out there. But nowadays a whole week can go by with absolutely nothing caught," said Hedayat Mohammadi, a fisherman who has been plying the waters off this Iranian Caspian Sea port for the past 26 years. "After the break-up of the Soviet Union , the poorer people and smugglers living in the new republics have been plundering the sea. The state management has gone. There are no controls on illegal fishing, there is no effort at conservation," fumed Mohammad Pourkazemi, a scientist who heads Iran 's Sturgeon Research Center . Hatcheries along the 1,000 kilometer (600 mile) coast of I.R. Iran release up to 18 million young sturgeon into the sea every year, although most are of the Persian strand that keep to Iran 's southern part of the sea and even then the success rate is minuscule. UN's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which raised the Iranian export quota for 2003, has lowered its quota by 11 percent in 2004. Poaching is such a lucrative business that a sturgeon fisherman employed by the state fisheries could easily increase his income seven fold. "Public awareness is the key to it all," said Pourkazemi. "As long as the people living around an ecosystem are not made conscious about the consequences of their acts, all the other efforts are more or less in vain."



Iranian Rivers Under Threat

December 16, 2004 – (Iran Daily): Head of Chalous and Noshahr Department of Environment in Mazandaran Province, Mehrnoush Kiakajouri, told IRNA that major pollutants including urban and rural emissions have endangered regional environment seriously. He added that household, industrial and hospital wastewater was discharged into the two rivers of Sardabroud and Chalous, pushing fish in the ecosystems to the brink of extinction. "This is while the two rivers provide the best environment for breeding fish in western Mazandaran," he noted. Kiakajouri further stated that 215 tons of garbage is annually produced in Chalous and Noshahr causing serious harm to the environment. Sardabroud and Chalous rivers are 80 and 175 kilometers long respectively and spring from Takht-e Soleiman, Kandovan and Kajour mountains, flowing into the Caspian Sea. "Establishment of two dams over the rivers without coordinating the projects with the Department of Environment have not only made it difficult for fish to lay eggs, but have also caused a huge amount of sediment to deposit in the riverbed, making the water murky," he explained.



Reviving of Fishing Industry in Kazakhstan

December 10, 2004 - (The Times of Central Asia): Shokan Alpeisov, Director of the Kazakh Fish Industry Center in an exclusive interview talked about the fishing industry in Kazakhstan. He said "It is very difficult to stop poaching completely. In some regions fishing is the only source of food for people. So our task is to reduce poaching. In 1991 the annual fish catch in Kazakhstan was 90,000-95,000 tons. In the mid-1990s the annual catch decreased to 35,000 tons and has now reached 57,000 tons of fish. The official statistics, however, do not reflect the illegal fishing whose output is probably as high as the official catch." He elaborated that "Legalization of the entire fishing industry in Kazakhstan might improve the situation with the protection of fish resources. If not combated, poaching will grow and create a soil for corruption. Unfortunately, the water fauna has dropped out of the legislation sphere, and now we try to change the situation. Today 16 species of water animals are protected by law in Kazakhstan." He also talked about the nutritional value of sea food and added "Kazakhstan ranks low in terms of per capita fish consumption. According to nutrition requirements, a person must eat at least 16-17 kilograms of fish a year. In the previous years the Kazakh citizens consumed 10-11 kilograms of fish a year, but today is only 5-6 kilograms." He explained that "large fish-processing plants in Kazakhstan work at no more than one third of their capacity." He concluded "In the future we plan to create export-oriented fishery clusters that will catch, refrigerate, and process fish and ship the products for export."

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