

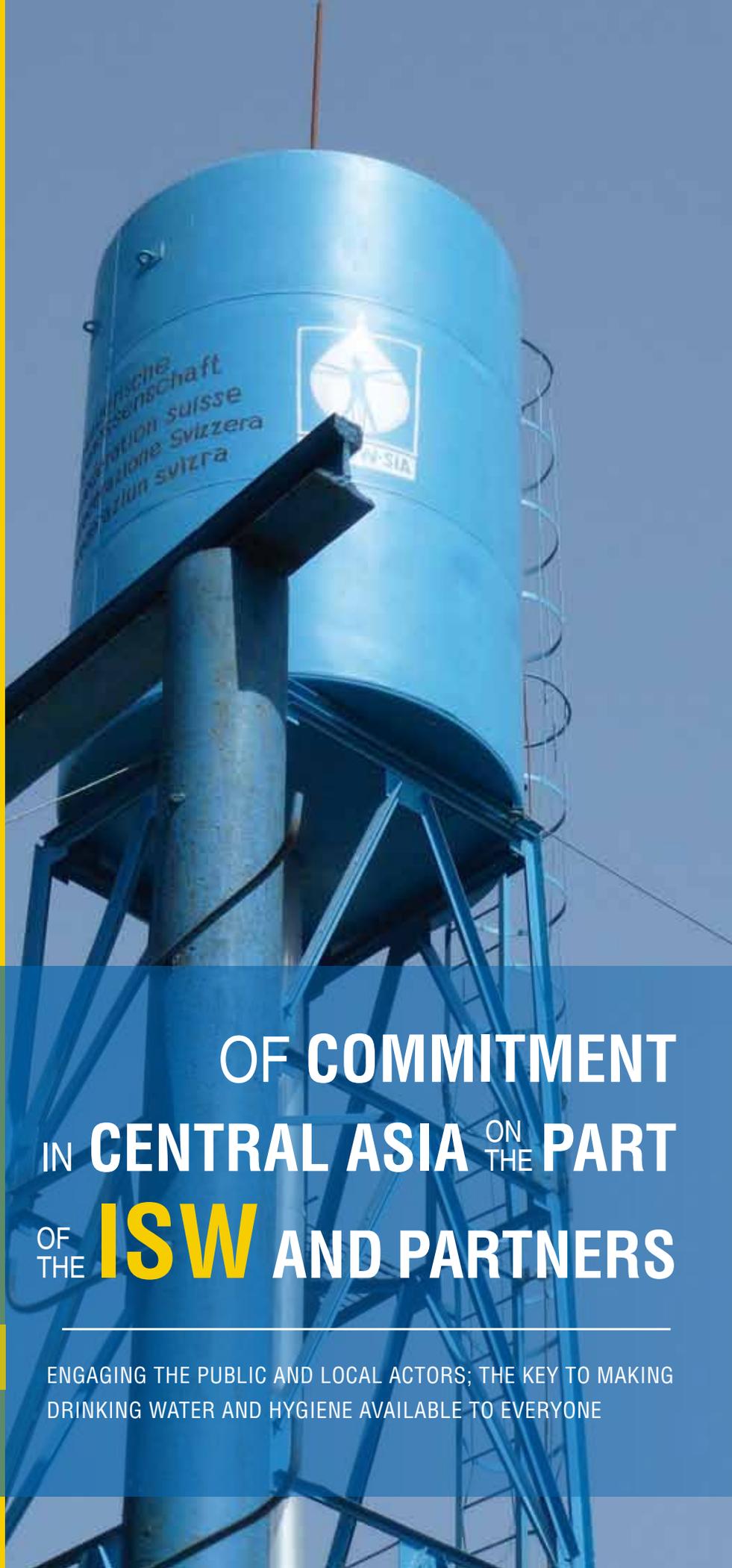
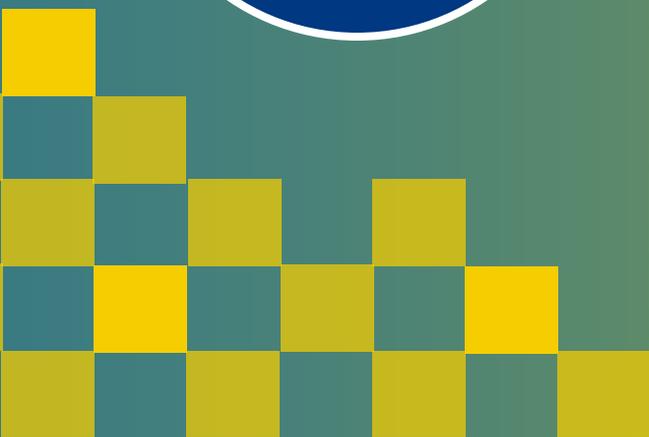


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15 Years



OF COMMITMENT
IN CENTRAL ASIA ON THE PART
OF THE **ISW** AND PARTNERS

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL ACTORS; THE KEY TO MAKING
DRINKING WATER AND HYGIENE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

JUNE 2013

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THE FERGHANA VALLEY:

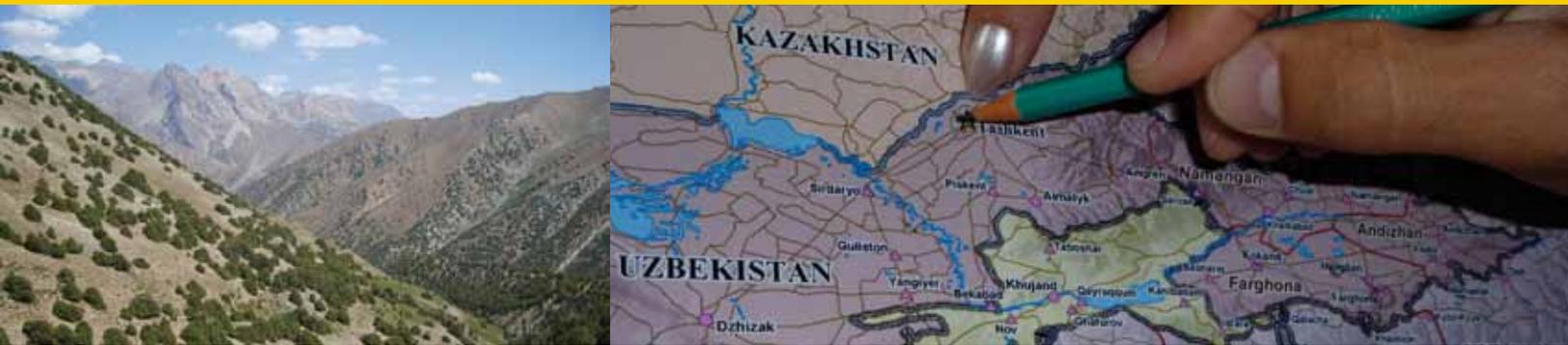
A CROSSROADS OF PEOPLE AND INTERESTS

THE FERGHANA VALLEY:

- Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan
- Is the breadbasket of Central Asia and an agricultural exportation zone, most notably toward Russia.



The “gold valley”, located on the **Silk Trail**, has a long, well-documented history dating back to Alexander the Great’s invasion in the 4th century BC. It has gone through periods of great cultural, scientific and religious prosperity, but has also seen dark periods – even recently there have been ethno-nationalist tensions and disputes on water and land.



The three Republics, are independent after the collapse of the USSR, from which they had been part since 1924. The majority of the population is Muslim, with ethnic origins that have remained fairly straightforward. Uzbeks have Turkish origins. The Kyrgyz are of Turkish descent as well, but with strong Chinese and Mongolian influences. The Tajiks are of Persian origin.

With the introduction and steep growth of cotton production during the Soviet era, water resources management became a significant challenge. The area does not receive much rainfall (200 to 400 mm a year); water is supplied by the Syr Darya's various tributaries draining water from the mountain ranges to the Aral Sea in the western side of Uzbekistan.

Based on the Soviet model, public utilities – which include the drinking water supply – are organized in a very centralized manner, which places emphasis on the quantity, not necessarily the quality of water, nor the service, with a pricing policy that fails to encourage rational or sustainable use. At the present time, infrastructure is very old and the municipal or regional exploitation (vodokanal) services are under-equipped, they employ old people, and use governance practices that do not live up to the expectations of a dynamic population that is ever more aware of the importance of guaranteed access to potable water. In rural areas, the old distribution systems are now obsolete and a significant proportion of the population in all three countries collects its water from open-air irrigation canals.

The water sector development strategies are currently evolving in the three countries. In Tajikistan, reforms were passed in 2006, but their implementation has been somewhat slow. In Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, a new sectorial strategy was developed in 2012 and is in the process of approval. Although the different water uses are better incorporated during the planning stage, the organizational and regulatory frameworks still need to be improved when it comes to operating procedures and financing, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, where the concept of centralized project management might exceed the capabilities of state agencies.

The role played by local actors, in particular, is underdeveloped. In all the region, communities are traditionally organized around the “mahallas,” local governance institutions built on family sense of belonging and Islamic religious customs. After their independence, the three countries revisited the concept of local self-governance, but with varying mandates, methods and relationships with the administration. These organizations¹ do not have any formal, definite powers in the water and sanitation sector, but with the emergence of a myriad of local development projects, their ability to engage, coordinate, and regulate has been in great demand. It remains the question, for the three countries, of under whose jurisdiction these local public services fall.

Notes: 1. Mahalla in Uzbekistan, Jamoat in Tajikistan, and Ayil Okmotu in Kyrgyzstan.

SCALING UP

THE LOCAL APPROACH



The International Secretariat for Water began working in Central Asia at the beginning of 1998. During the first 3-year phase, an innovative approach was developed and tested in 5 villages (4 in Kyrgyzstan, 1 in Uzbekistan). It involved creating a community organization to implement and self-manage a small water supply network, as well as offering hygiene education and micro-credit to families. A second three-year project supplied water to 4 more villages in Kyrgyzstan and

two in Uzbekistan. Local NGOs continued running the credit programme. A particular effort was made to involve youths and young adults – by holding youth parliaments – and to develop the local actors’ skillsets, not only to consolidate what the villages had gained, but also to replicate the experience in other areas. The budget for this start-up period varied between € 50,000 to € 70,000/year and was financed by the Dutch NGO NOVIB, the French NGO CCFD and UNICEF.

In the meantime, the Kyrgyzstan team created “The Central Asian Alliance for Water” based in Osh, whose mission was to support local actors developing long-term water, hygiene and sanitation projects, while encouraging communities to participate in the sector’s governance. The CAAW provided support to 35 water committees in Kyrgyzstan, which represented more than 110,000 users.

At the end of 2003, the Swiss cooperation became the main funding agency and a more structured approach was formulated. The first phase of the Regional Water and Sanitation Programme took place in the Andijan and Ferghana provinces in Uzbekistan, and was implemented in 14 villages. A second phase, which just ended at the end of 2012, reached into the Tajik area of the Ferghana Valley (Sughd oblast), taking place in 12 Uzbek villages and 6 Tajik areas. During this period of institutional anchoring, the synergy created between educational, health and food services, and the respective governments was strengthened thanks to an emphasis on dialogue and ownership.

The latest phase – also the third and last – spans 2013-2016 and takes place in Uzbekistan. Its strategic objectives are as



follows: i) To consolidate the gains that have been acquired in the Uzbek part of the valley; ii) To replicate the approach used in the Syr Darya area, west of the capital, Tashkent, and scaling up with a World Bank funding; iii) To gain Uzbek government

support in the implementation of operational frameworks for the sector in rural areas. In Tajikistan a new consolidation and replication phase should be put into motion by 2014.

	UZBEKISTAN	TAJIKISTAN	KYRGYZSTAN
TOTAL POPULATION¹	28.1M	7.1M	5.4M
POPULATION IN THE FERGHANA VALLEY	6.3M	2.1M	2.7M
GDP PER INHABITANT (CONSTANT USD FROM 2005)¹	2.903 USD	2.053 USD	2.126 USD
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX¹	0.654 (114 th)	0.622 (125 th)	0.622 (125 th)
ECONOMIC GROWTH (YEARLY AVERAGE 2010-2012)²	8.3%	7.1%	2.1%
ECONOMICAL STRUCTURE (AGRICULTURE/INDUSTRY/SERVICES)²	18-36-45%	23-23-54%	20-27-53%
ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER³	87%	66%	89%
RURAL AREA³	81%	57%	85%
ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION³	100%	95%	93%
RURAL AREA³	100%	94%	93%

Sources: 1. PNUD – HDR 2012 2. World Bank 2013 3. JMP WHO-UNICEF 2013

CONCRETE

AND SUSTAINABLE RESULTS

With a novel approach in this area, and in a context of gradually deteriorating living conditions, services and organizational fabric that characterized the new republics during their first years of independence, the water and sanitation program of the ISW and its partners has highlighted the relevance and feasibility of decentralized and integrated water supply, hygiene and sanitation management in rural areas. The most striking results of these 15 years of commitment are presented in the following diagram.

Input

- A team was formed whose numbers increased from 8 to 18, including 2 international technical assistants
- Around 8.5 million euros were invested, including 8 million provided by Swiss cooperation agencies
- The ISW, SDC and CAAW created a network to pool their expertise (until 2007)

Results

- 154,000 people now have access to drinking water within 200 metres: 20,000 in Kyrgyzstan, 34,000 in Tajikistan, and 100,000 in Uzbekistan
- 40 user associations operating their supply systems according to governance principles
- 500,000 children and 300,000 households have learned about water use and hygiene

Products

- 42 rural water supply systems: 8 in Kyrgyzstan, 3 in Tajikistan (one of which supplies multiple villages) and 31 in Uzbekistan
- Educational material to promote hygiene and train educators, developed and certified by regional authorities in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan
- 2,320 teachers and 2,420 health workers completed the hygiene and PHAST method training

Impacts

- 30% to 60% decrease of waterborne illnesses (depending on the village)
- Lower water costs (€1.5 to €2 / family / month compared to €6 to €10 before the installation of the water supply systems in certain villages)
- community affairs managed by the people

In the Tajik village of Karakchikum, the committee cannot handle the 200 demands for water payment exemptions. The State does in fact allow some exemptions based on various social categories. However, this only applies to public services. At its general assembly, the

committee approved a list of “vulnerable people” eligible to receive free water. Is not the State that has now to be in charge of the water payment of those social groups that it wants to exonerate to avoid jeopardising the committees' social and financial balance ?

MEANWHILE, THE SECTOR'S GOVERNANCE PARADIGMS HAVE BEEN MODIFIED:

- The populations and their local governing structures no longer wait for State initiatives or direction; they organize and finance themselves to create their own priority service.
- Payment formulas for water services – with different rates depending on the level of service needed and the amounts actually used – are now readily accepted and are paired with an accountability mechanism at the local level.
- Water quality has become an issue; sanitization is generalized and controlled; water drawing, transporting and storing follow hygiene guidelines; the protective perimeter around the boring and stocking areas is kept clean; health centres closely monitor the spread of waterborne illnesses...
- The user association and its steering committee are carving themselves a space in relation to the local community, the administration and state services. This is an ongoing effort since water supply is considered to be a public utility and a part of the investments (like drilling) belongs to the State. However, the work has been partially financed by users, who manage the supply system for years without governmental support.

EMPOWERING LOCAL ACTORS

THE TECHNICAL CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION ARE ADAPTED TO DECENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT

The vast majority of water systems are fed by boring sites, which the project re-equipped with a pump, a disinfection unit (chlorinator or UV) and a small elevated water tank or standpipe. In Tajikistan, a small supply system treats surface water, and another system, fed by only one boring site, supplies 4 villages spread over more than 100km². Water is distributed through communal standpipes with flat-rate billing or, increasingly often, through home connections where water meters can calculate the price according to the volume used. For specialized labour needs, local businesses are recruited through competitive bidding. Non-specialized labor is found within the community. The project's team ensures technical control and supplies hydraulic parts.

THE COMMUNITY OF FUTURE USERS GROWS INTO ITS ROLE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

It submits its application and supports the project team with technical, social and organizational diagnosis. Its contribution to the investment matches the costs of communal standpipes, one for every 6 to 8 families to limit travel distance and ensure controlled management. An association is formed, with a General Assembly and Steering Committee, which names and monitors an Executive Committee in charge of technical, administrative and financial operations. With the project's support, the operation and maintenance plans, as well as the rates are set by the Steering Committee and approved by the Assembly. The technical and organizational concept leads to the progressive development of the service; it is designed to allow the expansion, intensification and promotion of household connections, awareness raising campaigns about water use,





and regular assembly meetings to monitor accountability and approve plans to manage and develop the network.

HYGIENE AWARENESS IS A TRICKLE DOWN APPROACH THAT GETS THE ENTIRE REGION INVOLVED

PHAST method handbooks were created under the project's guidance. Teachers and health workers in the villages were trained by a team of regional trainers, who were themselves trained thanks to the project. The fairly conventional training sessions in schools and health centres are paired with various events meant to engage the public, such as the three global WaSH days (water, sanitation, hand-washing). Community spokespeople from the water associations teach the PHAST method to families. School washrooms are renovated where needed and equipped with a hand-washing station. Health centres are involved in monitoring waterborne illnesses and the disinfection unit's effectiveness.

BORN AT A COMMUNITY-ONLY LEVEL, THE PROGRAM IS NOW BASED ON AN EVOLVING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Local governance structures are involved in organizing user associations and ensuring that they are running smoothly. The associations have a legal personality –although they can still be optimized within a regulatory framework that is not quite appropriate for public utilities self-management structures. At the decentralized level, government services play their role to the fullest as consultative support and by implementing the hygiene component. Institutions at the national level participate in management and progressively integrate new knowledge into the reforms.



Le droit à l'eau
The right to water
El derecho al agua
Das Recht aufs Wasser

5 LESSONS

1 Local ownership and decentralized management are an alternative for water supply in rural areas when public agencies cannot bring their services close enough. This approach is based on the users and the community getting involved from the beginning of the conceptualization of the technical and managerial system.

2 A pricing policy that takes into account all the costs (including the amortization, which represents 50 to 60% of the cost) can be affordable for rural populations – in a context where the cost of water was excessively expensive before the installation of the collective service.

3 Access to clean water, paired with a gradually changing attitude toward hygiene, has a big impact on a population's health. In some villages, typhus was completely eradicated, reports of hepatitis decreased dramatically, and diarrhea was reduced by more than 50%.

4 An approach that promotes local accountability and supports change regarding attitudes toward water use, hygiene and the organisation of communal services need close and long-lasting support. Thanks to the local actors who took responsibility, the costs remained manageable.

5 A community that works to develop its own collective priority service creates a social dynamic and renews its confidence. It must work closely with the administration to ensure adequate regulations and to involve agencies to foster a sustainable partnership dynamic.

The average investment cost is €55 per water user, including all costs, or about €40 when the regional and national operation costs are deducted (minimum wage in the sub-area fluctuates around €30/month).

The rates are based on the recovery of all costs, including that of amortization. They vary between €0.2 to €0.5/m³, depending on the system load and the service level.

This amounts to 1 to 3% of the household budget.

Currently the recovery rate is 78%, but half of the associations obtain a rate greater than 90%.

THE 5 MAIN CHALLENGES

1. A village-based management cannot – on its own – guarantee that the system will endure in the long run: it is also necessary to have access to sufficient specialized human and technical resources.
2. An appropriate level of regulation must guarantee good governance and, among others, monitor the committees' performances, ensure the security of savings and investments, and create incentives to enforce the rules.
3. The institutional and regulatory framework in all three countries is not quite optimal for a decentralized, community-based approach toward collective services.
4. The lack of cohesion between the various parties' different approaches causes confusion and slows down the process of local actors taking responsibility.
5. Local actors have poor access to financing arrangements or savings to secure amortizations.

WHAT THE ISW AND ITS PARTNERS ARE WORKING ON

- Networking and facilitating the exchange of information
- Forming a federation of committees
- Strengthening relationships with the other parties involved (vodokanal, local finance companies, service centres, etc.)
- Promoting benchmarking between committees
- Implementing a Financial and Technical Monitoring system with a communal database
- Involving authorities
- Documenting experiences
- Fostering dialogue with the government to update sectorial policies and regulatory frameworks
- Offering adequate tools and handbooks
- Teaching participants about the strategy to use
- Replicating the approach in other areas
- Participating in exchange programmes
- Undertaking participatory research to gain access to local financing: mutual funds for water committees, suitable financial products from banks, etc.



CONCLUSION

The main lesson we have learned through our Central Asia cooperation project has to do with time. The time it takes to understand, to establish ourselves, to gain acceptance, to become a stakeholder and to put into motion local, regional and national negotiations, while respecting local power dynamics, including those of the users. We believe that by not forcing issues or making any impositions, sharing skillsets when needed, and promoting local potential, we will guarantee sustainability. We must never forget that we are here to make water management the key to communal prosperity. We will always fight against handouts and the exploitation of populations and their living environments, and we will be transparent about our intentions.

Two projects lay before us: scaling up and implementing a reinvented governance, from a local level to an international one, one drop at a time.

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