

UNDP / GWP
Project for a National Plan Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and
Water Efficiency Plan

First Working Paper on National and River Basin IWRM and Efficiency Plans

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**First Working Paper on National and River Basin IWRM and Efficiency Plans
UNDP Project for a National IWRM and Water Efficiency Plan**

1 Summary of Main Points

Summary points of the National and River Basin IWRM and Efficiency Plans:

- Under this Project assistance will be provided in the preparation of a National IWRM and Efficiency Plan and eight River Basin IWRM and Efficiency Plans
- IWRM means the planning and management of water in a sustainable and integrated way
- Efficiency means the use of water resources in a way that minimises waste of resources (water, financial, human and other)
- The National IWRM Plan is proposed by the Project to be completed by October 2005, with key milestones of: November, 2004 for a description of the current situation and a log frame of activities, January 2005 for an outline of the future, May 2005 for a rough draft for budgeting purposes
- The River Basin IWRM Plans are proposed by the Project to be completed by March 2007, with key milestones of: March 2005 for a description of the current situation and a list of priorities, March 2006 for an outline of the future and the transition plan, March 2007 for the Annual Reports to be superseded by the River Basin IWRM Plans
- The IWRM Plans require significant involvement from CWR and RBO staff
- The IWRM Plans require strong stakeholder involvement to ensure effective implementation
- The IWRM Plans are strongly linked with other Project components of: a Strategy for Achieving MDGS and the Establishment of River Basin Councils
- The River Basin IWRM Plans will be piloted in the Balkash-Alakol Basin but with all RBOs involved in the process from the start
- The National and River Basin IWRM Plans are NOT infrastructure development plans, they are about management change
- The IWRM Plans are not one-time events, but rather are updated and revisited regularly
- The success of the implementation of the Plans is fully dependent on the commitment of Central Government, especially in terms of organisational and financial support

2 Introduction

2.1 Project Description

This Working Paper on National River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management and Efficiency Plans is prepared through the Project for a National IWRM and Efficiency Plan managed by UNDP and funded by the Government of Norway and assisted by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the UNDP. The Project will support and assist the CWR and RBOs in preparing the National and River Basin IWRM Plans. *This Working Paper is prepared as a brief description of what the Plans may contain and how they may be facilitated and accomplished, with the intention of beginning dialogue toward the structure of the Plans.* This paper will be discussed at several stakeholder events to agree on the approach and contents of

the Plans. This First Working Paper on IWRM will be followed by a Second Working Paper on IWRM Plans in November 2004, following the various stakeholder forums.

Three of the primary outputs of the Project are:

1. National IWRM and Efficiency Plans and River Basin IWRM and Efficiency Plans
2. Establishment of River Basin Councils (RBCs)
3. Strategy for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Water

The three outputs are cross linked. For example, the National and River Basin IWRM Plans and the Strategy for MDGs will require water stakeholders to participate in the formulation of priorities and the transition strategy. The establishment of the River Basin Councils is one aspect of mobilising stakeholders in the process and will be an early part of the work in instituting IWRM. The context of working to achieve the MDGs and to create an IWRM environment also provides a good framework for mobilising stakeholders and establishing the RBCs.

Because of the simultaneous development of the IWRM Plans and Strategy for MDGs, one of the target priorities of the Plans will be on what is needed for achieving the MDGs mainly in the perspective of water resource management. Similarly, the need for stakeholder participation in both the MDGs and the IWRM Plans is facilitated through the output of establishing the River Basin Councils. In addition, the Committee for Water Resources links the three components as their responsibilities as the national water managers cut across these key water initiatives.

2.2 Brief Outline of the National and River Basin IWRM Plans

Output 1 of the Project is a National Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Efficiency Plan and related River Basin IWRM Plans for the eight river basins of Kazakhstan. The proposed schedule for these tasks is:

- Completion of the first National IWRM Plan by October 2005
- Completion of the first River Basin IWRM Plans by March 2007

The word “first” is used in the description of the Plans because these will not be single, final, one time reports. They are plans that will continually evolve and need to be updated at regular intervals until such time as IWRM is firmly established. This is a process which is expected to take many years, depending on the magnitude of the task and, most importantly, the priority given to it by Central Government and the resulting financial and organisational support it receives.

The National IWRM Plan is a Committee for Water Resources (CWR) document. Technical and other assistance will be provided by the Project in support of its preparation. Essentially, the National IWRM Plan will detail how the CWR will institute IWRM and, by extension, how the Government of Kazakhstan will facilitate and support IWRM through the CWR and (possibly) other organisations.

The National IWRM Plan precedes the River Basin IWRM Plans because it prepares the foundation and describes the way forward for the River Basin IWRM plans. The National Plan deals with the bigger picture of water governance – what needs to be

done at the National level to facilitate IWRM in Kazakhstan? However, work can begin on the River Basin IWRM Plans simultaneously.

The River Basin IWRM Plans will be prepared by each of the eight River Basin Organisations (RBOs) in Kazakhstan, again with technical and other assistance from the UNDP Project. The River Basin Plans will be more detailed than the National Plan in that they will address a more hands-on approach to IWRM. They will also be oriented to the specific considerations of the river basin.

Completing the IWRM Plans assumes a large degree of involvement from the CWR and the RBOs. The IWRM Plans are not one-time events, but rather are updated and revisited regularly (possibly every year to begin with) so that progress can be monitored, shortcomings corrected and schedules maintained.

3 Background

3.1 The Johannesburg Directive

The concept and principles of Integrated Water Resources Management are keys to sustainable development. Hence a main directive of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) was to prepare National IWRM and Water Efficiency Plan by 2005. This statement suggests completion prior to, or at least early in, 2005. Starting as we are in mid 2004, it is not possible to make such a deadline, so the completion of the first National IWRM Plan is proposed for October 2005, which is very much achievable with a concerted effort to do so.

The Global Water Partnership, through its affiliated country partnerships (specifically, in this case, the Kazakhstan Water Partnership) are facilitating the process of ensuring that all countries prepare their IWRM Plans. GWP prepared a document as a general guide to preparation of the plans¹. The document is expected to be updated in August 2004. The Guide will be referred to frequently in this Working Paper with several quotes taken from it. However, this Working Paper does not repeat the Guide. The Guide contains a wealth of information and ideas on how to approach and complete the Plan and should be read in conjunction with this Working Paper.

The Johannesburg Directive contains five clear messages:

1. *Countries must translate principles of IWRM into a specific plan.*

While there has been much discussion about IWRM in Kazakhstan, few practical steps have been made toward seriously taking on the principles of IWRM. Hence water resources management remains fragmented and under funded.

2. *Countries must complete IWRM Plans by a firm target date – 2005.*

The Kazakhstan Plan will be prepared by late 2005. Kazakhstan is also well on track with some of the governance concerns in that the new Water Code (2003) is in place and embraces many (though not all) of the principles of IWRM and also a 'Strategy

¹ Guidance in Preparing a National Integrated Water Resources Management and Efficiency Plan: Advancing the WSSD Plan of Implementation, Version 1 April 2004, GWP Technical Committee (available in [English and Russian at www.gwpforum.org](http://www.gwpforum.org))

for the Development of River Basin Organisations' has been prepared through the recent, DfID funded, *Nura Ishim River Basin Management Project*². Additionally, a 'Strategy for the Improvement of Water Quality'³ was prepared under the same project which can be used as an initial working platform for addressing water quality issues in the Plan. Rebuilding and improving the water monitoring situation was also addressed in 'Monitoring the Water Environment'⁴.

3. *All countries should have a Plan.*

Kazakhstan will have a Plan by October 2005 with the assistance from this Project.

4. *Developing countries must be supported in the process of preparing their Plans.*

While Kazakhstan is not a developing country, it is being supported under this Project through the Government of Norway and the GWP.

5. *The content of the Plans must be wide-ranging, covering institutional, financial and technological change.*

Most water resources management professionals in Kazakhstan are well aware of the kinds of changes needed in governance, institutional aspects, financial, technical and other areas. This is now an opportunity to formalise the requirements for change and specify how and when those changes will occur.

While the Johannesburg Directive specifies a National IWRM Plan, real water resources management happens at the river basin level. Therefore, River Basin IWRM Plans will follow quickly behind the National Plans in all countries (it is already part of the European Union Water Framework Directive, for example). The opportunity presented in this Project allows the preparation of River Basin IWRM Plans shadowing the National Plan so that effective water management can begin immediately at the basin level.

The National IWRM Plan (and the subsequent River Basin IWRM Plans) will follow the principles of IWRM (see Section 3.2) but it will be entirely Kazakhstan oriented, aimed at improving Kazakhstan's specific and unique water resources management problems.

3.2 Principles of Integrated Water Resources Management

As a reminder, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)⁵ is the term given to international best practice in water management. It has six basic principles:

1. The river basin is the correct administrative unit for managing water.
2. Water resources and the land which forms the river basin area must be integrated, in other words, planned and managed together.

² Nura Ishim River Basin Management Project, Final Report, Volume 2 – A Strategy for the Development of RBOs and CWR, DfID & CWR, January 2004

³ Nura Ishim River Basin Management Project, Final Report, Volume 7 – A Strategy for the Improvement of Water Quality, DfID & CWR, January 2004

⁴ Nura Ishim River Basin Management Project, Final Report, Volume 6 – Monitoring the Water Environment, DfID & CWR, January 2004

⁵ Original Principles developed at the Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio, 1992

3. Social, economic and environmental factors must be integrated within water resources planning and management.
4. Surface water and groundwater and the ecosystems through which they flow must be integrated within water resources planning and management.
5. Public participation is necessary for effective water resources decision making. It requires good public awareness and understanding so that participation is informed participation. (Because water is managed for the sole purpose of providing water to the people and the environment in which they live.)
6. Transparency and accountability in water management decision making are necessary features of sound water resources planning and management. Transparency means the people need to be informed about the options in water management to be able to respond to decisions made about their water. Accountability means the public has the right to question and complain to responsible organisations and those organisations need to answer to their clients – the public.

In Kazakhstan, the first principle of water being managed at the river basin level, is in place in the form of River Basin Organisations under the Committee for Water Resources. However, significant capacity building and increased authority are needed to transform the RBOs to become THE authorities on all water related matters within their river basins.

With regard to the remainder of the six Principles of IWRM, some are adhered to some degree, but they are generally not a feature of water resources management in Kazakhstan. The National IWRM and Efficiency Plan will define HOW all six principles will be adopted.

Efficient water use is implied or assumed in all of the above principles. Part of the Johannesburg Directive was to make efficiency more explicit to ensure that efficiency is properly addressed in the IWRM Plans. In this context 'efficiency' means the use of the water in a way that minimises resources, especially water, but including financial, human and other resources.

The terms 'planning' and 'management' are usually used in tandem in describing the IWRM approach to water resources to emphasise the fact that good planning is a prerequisite for good management.

4 The National IWRM and Water Efficiency Plan

4.1 A Process of Change

First and foremost, the National IWRM Plans are NOT infrastructure development plans. The National IWRM Plans will address the bigger, nationally important issues in water resources management, which are mainly those of governance.

It can be said that, at present in Kazakhstan, water resources are not very effectively managed and not according to the principles of IWRM. Therefore, adopting IWRM will be a process of change. The National IWRM Plan is therefore a document about

change - which aspects of water resources management require change, what form that change should take and how to achieve the changes.

The GWP guidance document on preparing the IWRM Plans (see footnote 1 on page 3 above) lists the areas requiring change as:

1. The role of the state in water resources development, management and use –
 - Policy instruments and the legal and regulatory framework relating to water resources
 - The way in which water is allocated among water users
 - Data collection systems and how information is made available to users
 - Policy regarding public-private and tripartite partnerships
2. Systems to reconciling water quantity and quality needs of all water users
 - Methods to balance human activities and ecosystem protection
 - Mechanisms for consultation and public participation
3. Investments and policy change
 - Measures to improve the efficiency of water infrastructure
 - Structural and non-structural measures to mitigate the effects of floods and droughts and other extreme water related events
 - Stimulation of non-conventional approaches to water resources development and conservation, including desalination, water recycling and water harvesting
4. The way in which the roles of women in the provision, management and safeguarding of water are promoted and supported
5. Institutional reform and development
 - The way in which capacity building needs are assessed and capacity building efforts are promoted
 - The effectiveness of management agencies (including river basin organisations)
 - Effectiveness of regulatory authorities
6. Mechanisms to achieve financial sustainability in water management systems
 - Subsidies
 - Tariff policies
 - Cost recovery

Kazakhstan is well placed to make the changes necessary to adopt IWRM. First, there is a strong foundation of law and of government initiatives and development strategies on which to build:

- The new Water Code (2003) and its associated Regulations and By-Laws, which will be approved during 2004, is the key piece of legislation guiding the Plan.
- The Law on Environmental Protection (1997) also has many components which are related to water and govern the protection of the environment, including the water environment.
- The Strategic Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan Up To 2010 (approved 4 December 2001, no. 735) includes several elements on the improvement of water resources, their management and the environment, all of which will

- have an impact or influence the National and River Basin IWRM and Efficiency Plans.
- The President's Message to the people of Kazakhstan on "**Prosperity, Security and Ever Growing Welfare of all the Kazakhstan People**", a Vision for 2030 contains several references to ensuring good quality water to protect the health of the people and, especially to ensure the health and livelihood of rural people. While not specifically stated, improved water resources management, through adopting IWRM, is necessary to achieve the goals of the Vision.

Second, the river basin has already been established as the administrative unit for water management in the form of the River Basin Organisations. Further work is necessary to make the RBO THE authority on all water related matters within the river basin, as the RBOs of Kazakhstan do not yet have that authority or capacity. This Project will contribute to capacity building in RBOs and the CWR and the National IWRM Plan will detail and schedule those interventions.

Thirdly, River Basin Councils, which will be a significant step in stakeholder participation, have been instituted in law and will be established in fact during this Project.

There are, however, also some weak points. First, the CWR is under the Ministry of Agriculture. A Ministry of Agriculture is normally considered the worst place to house a water resources management organisation because of the obvious conflict of interest. It is generally considered, in international best practice, that the best place for a Committee for Water Resources is to be essentially independent under the Office of the Prime Minister or its equivalent. Failing that, a Ministry of Water Resources is a reasonable alternative.

Second, the CWR and the RBOs are badly underfunded to such an extent that they cannot effectively carry out the work accorded to them in law under the Water Code. Partly this is due to their location under the Ministry of Agriculture, but also due to the general lack of priority given to water resources by Central Government.

Third, there is poor organisation among the various ministries, departments, organisations which have a role in water management and service delivery. This situation has the result that there are several gaps in responsibility. One very worrying example, from the point of view of IWRM, is that no organisation has the responsibility to act to improve water quality in rivers and other water bodies (see Section 4.2).

4.2 Setting Priorities

The GWP Guidance Document indicates that good success has been seen where countries start by focusing on specific water management challenges. It is worth considering here what these challenges may be for Kazakhstan.

An obvious main priority is the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water. The emphasis in the Project is on Goal 9, Target 10⁶ of the MDGs, on water supply and sanitation. However, water cuts across all MDGs and the achievement of the MDGs will require good, solid water management and can be an

⁶ Millennium Development Goals of Kazakhstan, United Nations, 2002

effective vehicle for change. Also, the CWR and the RBOs specifically need to be explicitly involved in this work, and will need to build capacity to do so.

Additionally, based on experience with water resources management organisations in Kazakhstan, the priority water resources management issues over the next 10 years could be identified as:

- the improvement and management of water quality in all rivers and other water bodies of Kazakhstan
- the improvement of monitoring, of the information base and access to information
- rationalisation of water user, especially in irrigated agriculture

The Issue of Water Quality Management in Kazakhstan

One very major issue related to the authority of RBOs is that of integrating water quality improvement into water resources management. There are several organizations who are involved with water quality, mainly the Committee for Environmental Protection and their oblast departments and Kazhydromet. However, at present *no organisation has actual responsibility to take action to improve and later maintain the quality of water* in the rivers and other water bodies:

- Kazhydromet monitors water quality in rivers and other water bodies. Few organizations use this information and, indeed, over the last decade the number of monitoring locations and the frequency of sampling has deteriorated to the point where there is hardly any information collected.
- Oblast Departments of Environmental Protection (DEPs) provide permits for wastewater discharge according to a formula which does not take into account the whole of the basin of the river or other receiving water body. DEPs also monitor the discharges from the permit holders.

Neither of these organizations takes action on improving water quality. If we are to succeed in improving water quality in Kazakhstan there needs to be a responsible organization with a specific directive to improve water quality.

Within the principles of IWRM, the RBO is the proper organization to be responsible for water quality and watershed protection in addition to managing the resource quantity. Under the new Water Code, this status is implied (the RBOs are responsible for use and protection of water resources) but is not explicit.

This situation will require decisions on how to go forward in terms of responsibility. As mentioned above, the RBO is the correct organization in which to place this responsibility but, if the decision is made not to place it here, the decision must include where else to place that responsibility.

A 'Strategy for the Improvement of Water Quality' was prepared for the CWR under the DfID funded 'Nura Ishim River Basin Management Project'. This outlines a series of steps over the next five years to make a start on improving water quality. This should be built upon now to make a start on water quality actions.

All of these priorities will require strong and effective management from the CWR and all eight RBOs. Therefore an early item on the strategic agenda must be significant strengthening and targeted capacity building of the CWR and the RBOs so that they can become effective water managers.

4.3 Mobilisation and Participation of Stakeholders in the Plan

Stakeholder participation must be one of the main tools in the development of the Plan and stakeholders need to be mobilised relatively quickly. The Project will assist CWR and, initially, the Balkash-Alakol RBO in identifying stakeholders and mobilising them.

A Workshop is planned for 9 September with all RBOs and CWR participating as well as several other water professionals. The Workshop will cover all aspects of the Project, including the River Basin Councils and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the IWRM Plans.

A Round Table discussion in the Balkash-Alakol Basin is planned for late September with all identified stakeholders participating. This will be the first stakeholder forum on the subject of the National IWRM Plans, during which a plan of action will be discussed which will, among other things, identify how stakeholder participation will continue throughout the process.

In early November a Conference will be held on these main outputs and how they relate specifically to the Balkash-Alakol Basin. At the conference a survey of the delegates will be undertaken on the subject of the future of IWRM in Kazakhstan and what its priorities should be. The resulting information will form a major part of the Outline for the Future (see Section 4.4 below) which is the second stage of the development of the both the National and the River Basin IWRM Plans.

4.4 Main Contents of the National IWRM Plan

The GWP Guide lists three primary components of the Plan. It must:

- Describe the current way in which water resources development and management decisions are made and actions taken
- Outline where the country wants to be in the future in terms of decisions made and actions taken to solve problems
- Map out how it plans to move from where it is now to where it wants to go, with milestones and time frames (a transition strategy)

In addition, the Plans should include an Efficiency Plan to outline how water will be used more efficiently in the future.

Description of the Current Situation

In terms of the proposed National IWRM Plan for Kazakhstan, it is proposed that the first component, the description of the current situation, be completed by the end of October 2004. To be effective, this must be a very frank examination of the current situation, including its weak points as well as its strengths. It must also highlight the involvement and support (or lack of these) of other organisations. The direction and actions of the Plan will be based on this description, so it needs to be honest and correct.

The description of the current situation should include such aspects as:

- Monitoring and information
- Stakeholder participation
- Budgets and financing for water resources management
- Roles and responsibilities in water resources management
- Gaps in responsibilities
- Gaps between responsibilities and actions

The above is by no means a complete list. It is a few examples intended to generate further ideas.

Description of the Future

The description of where the country wants to be in the future with regard to water resources management should follow soon after that of the current situation. Its completion is proposed to be January, 2005. This must be fairly detailed, covering all aspects of water resources management, and include such components as:

- Who should have the responsibility for managing water quality and how they will operate
- Who should have the responsibility for watershed protection and management and how they will operate
- How the RBO will be structured (*note: the 'Strategy for Development of RBOs and CWR' prepared under the DfID funded 'Nura Ishim River Basin Management Project' can be used as a guide*)
- What the information needs are for effective water resources management and protection of water resources
- How the information needs will be met
- How water resources management will be budgeted and financed
- How the various ministries and organisations will cooperate and coordinate
- How stakeholders will participate in water management decision making

Again, this is not an exhaustive list, but examples for consideration.

In November a conference will be held to present ideas toward the preparation of the National IWRM Plan, but against the background of issues in the Balkash-Alakol River Basin. A broad base of stakeholders will present views, from their differing perspectives, pertinent to what the future of water resources management may look like. A survey of the delegates is planned to gain information on the priorities for the future. With this information, the Description of the Future component will be prepared by January 2005.

The Transition Strategy from the Current to the Future Situation

This is the main part of the work, describing how to institute IWRM into water management in Kazakhstan. This allows about 10 months to prepare, according to the proposed schedule, following from the descriptions of the current and future situations.

A Rough Draft of the National Plan should be prepared by May 2005 mainly for the purpose of including activities contained in the Plan for the 2006 budget (budgets for the following year are submitted in June).

This component will need to include such aspects as:

- What support (both organisational/administrative and financial) is needed from the various government bodies
- How the IWRM Plan will fit with other, related development plans and initiatives
- What specific capacity building the CWR and RBOs will need (which will depend on their functions)
- How that capacity building will take place and how it will be financed
- In what way will the CWR and RBOs interact with other departments with interest in water

Again, this is not an exhaustive list, but a few ideas for consideration.

Dates will be required for the targets and other aspects as well as milestones and indicators so that progress can be monitored, as the Plans will require frequent and regular reconsideration (see Section 4.5 below).

4.5 The Water Efficiency Plan

Part of the Johannesburg Directive was to improve the efficiency of water use. Efficiency in this context really means managing water demand. The Efficiency Plan is a part of the overall IWRM Plan. This needs a national approach because it will set policy for irrigated agriculture, for example, and for reduction of unaccounted for water in the urban domestic sub-sector. Kazakhstan needs to consider water efficiency very carefully as it is unlikely to begin to receive more water from its upstream neighbours; and it is very likely to receive less water in the future. Kazakhstan has significant spare water resources capacity in the form of water wasted through inefficient use.

The Efficiency Plan will need to outline how the efficient use of water will be achieved. This will need to include such aspects as what changes to agricultural policy are required.

4.6 Implementing the Plan

Good stakeholder participation during the development of the Plan is directly related to the ease of its implementation. An early start to mobilising stakeholders is a priority in the Project, and several means of mobilising them are planned, as described in this document.

The government approval process is the first necessary step after the Plan is completed in October 2005. This is expected to take several months, but well within time for the CWR to include actions contained within it into the 2006 budget application (June 2006) for the 2007 budget year. Referring back to the proposed schedule above, a rough draft of the Plan will be completed by May 2005 specifically to allow some actions to be budgeted for. If this schedule is maintained there will be budget available for the 2006 fiscal year.

Other actions may take more time. It is possible, even likely, that some amendments to law will be needed. These will take time to draft and time to gain agreement from other ministries before being adopted in law. Consideration will have to be given to

the legal process in the transition strategy, but there will be many things which can be done without the long approval and adoption process.

4.7 A Note on Transboundary Issues

Kazakhstan has a great concern with transboundary water, with about half of its water resource crossing the border from other countries and, to a lesser but significant extent, crossing the border out of Kazakhstan.

The National IWRM Plan therefore needs to address the transboundary issue. However, it is advisable that the transboundary concerns do not overshadow or overtake the national concerns of water management. Transboundary issues are addressed in many other forums and there is a significant amount of work, of change, needed to be done domestically in water resources management.

While work continues on building international cooperation on transboundary waters, Kazakhstan must improve its own water resources management capability.

4.8 A Continuing Process

The First National IWRM Plan, to be completed by October 2005 is the first step in the process of instituting IWRM in Kazakhstan. The actual implementation of IWRM, which will be outlined in the First Plan, will take several years, depending on the priority given to it by Central Government and the resultant support it receives.

The Plan will need to be revisited and updated on a regular basis. Initially, it may need certain aspects to be considered annually in order to monitor:

- What was accomplished in the past year
- How the targets for last year were met
- Which targets were not met
- Why targets were not met
- What improvements are needed for the following year(s)
- The detailed plan for next year, including targets and indicators
- Requirements (staffing, budget, etc.) to achieve the targets

5 The River Basin IWRM Plans

The River Basin IWRM Plans will be documents prepared by each River Basin Organization which will detail how they will institute IWRM in their basin. These will follow the same process as described above for the National IWRM Plans, but will contain a greater level of detail than the National IWRM Plans and will focus on the specific needs of the river basin.

The Balkash-Alakol River Basin will be used as a pilot to investigate and determine the best approach to the process of developing a River Basin IWRM Plan. However, the other seven RBOs will be involved from the start to facilitate their own IWRM Plans. Work on the other seven Plans will follow the Balkash-Alakol Plan closely.

As with the National IWRM Plans, these are NOT infrastructure development plans. However, they may include aspects of infrastructure development, as well as other,

non-structural approaches in demand management or other conservation activities that will be needed to improve water resources management.

As with the National Plans, specific challenges should be targeted as priorities. These will differ from one river basin to another and may be institutional or physical or may have a geographical context such as a special site requiring protection. Approaches to watershed protection, especially, will differ among the river basins.

Example differences between river basins in Kazakhstan include:

- the importance of irrigated agriculture (major in Aral-Syr Darya, minor in Ishim)
- the importance and type of industry (major in Irtysh, increasing in Ural-Caspian, minor in Ishim)
- the importance of tourism (major in Balkash-Alakol, less so in Aral-Syr Darya)
- population and cities (major in Balkash-Alakol, significant in Nura-Sarysu, growing in Ishim and Ural-Caspian)
- areas of special environmental and ecological concern (priority in Balkash-Alakol, also significant in Nura-Sarysu and Ural-Caspian and Aral-Syr Darya)
- the transboundary issue (all but the Nura-Sarysu are transboundary, but with differing concerns)
- the magnitude and type of water quality problems

There are also differences in the way the RBOs in each basin interact with other organizations and with stakeholders. It is therefore likely that the method of formalizing and improving such relationships within the context of IWRM may also differ.

The River Basin IWRM Plans will follow approximately the same approach as for the National Plans:

- Description of the Current Situation
- Outline for the Future
- Transition Strategy from the Current to the Future

Also similar to the National Plans, the River Basin IWRM Plans will be revisited and updated regularly.

It may be most efficient if the IWRM Plans are evolved from the current Annual Reports already prepared by the RBOs. As an initial step, it is proposed that the Balkash-Alakol RBO include its 'Description of the Current Situation' in their Annual Report in March 2005. This would outline the current problems they have, the effectiveness of carrying out their functions given the current situation, etc. The 2005 Annual Report could also include a list and description of the IWRM priorities in the Balkash-Alakol Basin.

During 2005 all RBOs should begin work on their IWRM Plans, preparing their Description of the Current Situation and the Outline for the Future to be included in the March 2006 Annual Report.

All Basins will be on approximately the same track at this point (March 2006) and they can all prepare their Transition Strategies simultaneously. By March 2007, the

Annual Report should essentially become an IWRM Plan, components of which will be updated on an annual basis, as the Annual Reports are done now.

This proposed change will require a directive from CWR to the RBOs, which should be ordered very soon (by October 2004) so that the RBOs can prepare for it.

It is intended that several workshops and other such support events will be undertaken throughout the period from November 2004 until March 2007.

6 Special Note on Information Needs in IWRM

Information is a key requirement of IWRM and the RBOs who will institute it in Kazakhstan. At present the RBOs do not generate or hold any information on water other than the water allocations permits. They have almost no access to information on water from other institutions and therefore cannot function as comprehensive water management organisations.

Good management must be based on good information, an open attitude to sharing information and a well considered approach to presenting information to water users and other interested persons.

A National Water Information Centre is planned by CWR but it did not receive the requisite budget for the 2004 fiscal year and it is uncertain whether it will receive budget for 2005. Investment is needed in water resources information as it is crucial to effective water resources planning and management saves the government money. Investing in good data is not a cost; it is an investment in the future which pays a return.

In the long term, Water Information Systems should be based in the RBOs with a central component with CWR. It is always more efficient to work at a lower level and the RBO staff are knowledgeable about their river basins and can therefore spot poor, inaccurate data and information which a person acting at the centre cannot. And it is within the RBO that the information is needed.

A Department of Monitoring, Information, Cadastre and Liaison has been recommended in the recently completed Nura Ishim Project⁷ which will manage all aspects of information including dissemination to other interested bodies.

As part of the preparation of a National IWRM and Water Efficiency Plan, information needs and a plan for improving access to and management of water data will be assessed.

7 Proposed Schedule for the IWRM Plans

⁷ Nura-Ishim River Basin Management Project, Final Report, Volume 2, 'A Strategy for the Development of RBOs and CWR', DfID, CWR, January 2004

Figure 1 below shows the proposed draft schedule for completing the plans. It is intended for discussion and will be updated at various points in the project, initially following Roundtable Discussion and the Workshop in September.

