

ECO-ARAL PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

*within GIZ Regional Project “Ecologically Oriented regional development in the Aral Sea Region”
in cooperation with Committee of forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
of the Republic of Kazakhstan*

MEETING MINUTES

December 2, 2022 | Hotel Wyndham Garden Astana, Astana, Kazakhstan

Meeting purpose:

Discussion of interim results for 2022 and plans for 2023 in the framework of the GIZ regional project “Ecologically oriented regional development in the Aral Sea region”.





List of participants

Steering Committee members:

1. Bolat Bekniyaz, Director of the Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (IFAS), SC Acting Chairman;
2. Tolkyn Nurabilov, Chief Expert, Forestry Development Department, of Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, SC Member (substitute);
3. Aliya Sadvokasova, Chief Expert, Department of State Environmental Control, Environmental Regulation and Control Committee, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, SC Member (substitute);
4. Zhuldyzai Aitzhanova, Head of Water Resources Division, Department of Natural Resources and Regulation of Nature Use, Kyzylorda region, SC Member (substitute).

ECO-ARAL team members:

5. Paul Schumacher, project manager;
6. Zlatko Tadic, project advisor;
7. Saibjabbor Khasanov, project national advisor;
8. Kairat Yegezhanov, project national advisor;
9. Julian Felten, project advisor;
10. Christine Adelman, GIZ regional office in Germany.

SC meeting invitees:

11. Zauresh Alimbetova, Deputy Director, Executive Board of the International Fund for

Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan (IFAS);

12. Aliya Baimaganova, Advisor to the Chairman of the Association of Environmental Organisations of Kazakhstan (AEOK);
13. Zhanuzak Baimanov, Head of Knowledge Dissemination Centre, Rice Research Institute named after I. Zhakhayev;
14. Kairat Ustemirov, Kazakhstan Biodiversity Conservation Fund;
15. Samat Kairbekov, FAO Programme Analyst in the Republic of Kazakhstan.



Discussion results

- (1) SC Chairman announced the agenda and introduced the SC members, project team and participants, and gave the floor to Paul Schumacher and SC members for welcome speeches;
- (2) Paul Schumacher welcomed participants and briefly informed on project activities and expectations from the meeting.
- (3) Zhuldyzai Aitzhanova welcomed the participants and briefly informed on the activities in Kyzylorda region in the field of environmental protection and cooperation with GIZ projects.
- (4) Paul Schumacher and the ECO-ARAL project team members presented interim results for 2022 and plans for 2023 (see attached presentation).
- (5) The members and participants noted:
 - the fruitful work in the Aral Sea region and the practical results of the project;

- the successful exchange of forestry delegations and the signed roadmap.

(6) The members and participants proposed to:

- include the activities carried out within the framework of the project in the final Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report as recommendations for resource-efficiency and alternative activities to the development plans of the regions (e.g. hydroponic fodder cultivation, laser levelling of rice paddies, artemia cultivation, etc.)
- actively participate at the donor’s conference organised by IFAS;
- pay attention to the problem of unsustainable reed harvesting and burning along natural lakes in Kyzylorda region and develop project solutions for sustainable reed use;
- consider piloting artificial farming of Artemia and other aquaculture species and the development of pond farming with possible co-financing by IFAS;
- consider developing and showcasing transplanting methods of rice using hydroponic systems and irrigation systems on solar panels (see attached presentation by Zhanuzak Baimanov);
- consider the regional tourism development in the Aral Sea region with possible

establishment and development of a geopark in the region (see attached short input presentation held by Bolat Bekniyaz);

- pay attention to the low survival rate and sanitary conditions of saxaul plantations on the dried seabed of the Aral Sea and develop project proposals for conservation of saxaul forests;
- consider the organization of experience exchange between representatives of the forest industry of Uzbekistan to develop a joint system (strategy) of afforestation of the dried seabed of the Aral Sea, unified methodology of saxaul plantations, development of seed production and seedling cultivation;
- consider digital mapping of the Uzbekistani part of the dried seabed of the Aral Sea;
- based on scientific research, consider the development of carbon certification and carbon sequestration accounting by the plantations.
- include in the recommendations for artemia pond cultivation the issues of state subsidies to reimburse the costs.

(7) SC members and participants agreed to send further project proposals and ideas to the ECO-ARAL project for consideration.