



CASPECO Project

Monthly E-Bulletin

Dear Caspian Stakeholders!

We are glad to inform you that issuance of an Electronic Bulletin is resumed. E-Bulletin of the CASPECO project is an instrument of environmental dialogue amongst the Caspian Stakeholders and a window for all the stakeholders to express their views, share news and communicate with others.

We welcome and in fact request you to use E-Bulletin to communicate with others on issues of interest as long as they relate to the extent of the Caspian Sea.

E-Bulletin presents you three type of information:

1. Information on the CEP/ Tehran Convention activities
2. Information on the planned activities
3. General information on environmental events and issues of interest to the Caspian stakeholders

Please send us electronically what you wish to appear on the CEP-Bulletin to PMCU@caspeco.org.

CSP/ Tehran Convention activities

- Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU) now fully staffed, equipped and functional
- CASPECO Project Inception Meeting was held in Astana, April 15-17
- Stakeholders Meeting was held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, May 13-14
- First rounds of the Matched Small Grant Program and Micro Environmental Grant Program (MEG) were launched
- MSGP/MEG training workshops were held in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan
- Project staff received training on ATLAS system and GeoNetwork opensource
- CASPECO Project Interim Manager Mr. H.Ghaffarzadeh participated as an observer in the Thirtieth Session of the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea
- Caspian Stakeholders Data Base updating began

Upcoming

- Celebration of the Caspian Day in Astana on August 12, 2009
- Scoping Meeting: Development of Ecosystem Monitoring System Regional Meeting, September 7-8, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol September 9-10, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- Regional Meeting: Biodiversity Protection Protocol, October 5-7, 2009, Baku, Azerbaijan
- Regional Meeting: Oil Pollution Incidents (OPI), November, Astana, Kazakhstan
- Regional Meeting of EIA in Trans boundary Context Protocol, December, Moscow, Russia

General information

- Iran and Russia will hold ship transport exercise
- Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan hold talks on Caspian Sea boosting European gas pipeline prospects
- Continuation of consultations on the convergence of views on the legal status of the Caspian Sea
- Iran will continue exploration activities in the Caspian Sea
- Creative competition “From Khazar to Jiekhun” was held in Turkmenistan
- Oil spilled in Volga basin
- Crash of a helicopter carrying oil workers
- More than two hundred dead seals found at Kazakhstan coast of the Caspian Sea

CEP/ Tehran Convention activities

Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU) started its operation in Astana

According to the COP-II decision the PCU in Tehran was closed and moved to Astana in February-March 2009. CASPECO Project short title for “The Caspian Sea: Restoring Depleted Fisheries and Consolidation of a Permanent Regional Environmental Governance Framework: CaspEco Project” has objectives to apply new thinking to the sustainable management and conservation of the Caspian Sea’s biological resources and to strengthen the regional governance through its two components: Component I: Ecosystem-based management of aquatic bioresources in the Caspian Sea and Component II: Strengthened Regional Environmental Governance. The project duration is over 30 months.

CASPECO Project Inception Meeting was held in Astana, April 15-17

CASPECO Inception Meeting was held on April 15/17, 2009 in Astana with high level participation from all five littoral countries, TCIS, UNESCO, FAO, WB, IAEA, UNOPS, UNDP, OSCE, EU and private sector. Meeting approved the project work plan and recommended more attention to climate change issues. Project Budget revised accordingly.

Stakeholders Meeting was held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, May 13-14

A Regional Caspian Stakeholders meeting was held in St Petersburg on May 13/14 which reviewed the Stakeholders Engagement Strategy and drew up elements of an action plan for enhanced stakeholders’ participation in the Tehran Convention. A draft Strategy is revised with the reflection of views expressed during this meeting and placed on CASPECO project website for comments of interested stakeholders.

Project staff received training on ATLAS system and GeoNetwork opensource

CASPECO project staff members: Mr. Hamidreza Ghaffarzadeh, Interim Project Manager, and Ms. Umit Kazhgaliyeva, Fin & Admin Affairs Officer participated in training workshop for the field projects held in UNOPS Headquarters in Copenhagen on July 7 -10, 2009. Participants were familiarized with the ATLAS financial system and taught how to implement it in the daily project payments and transactions. Having successfully completed the workshop, CASPECO project set up its own functional ATLAS system and started working on it.

CASPECO project staff member Mr. Vassiliy Sokolov participated in training workshop on GeoNetwork opensource held in Tunisia on June 13-16. Participant gained knowledge on a standards based, free and open source catalog application to manage spatially referenced resources through the web.

First rounds of the Matched Small Grant Program and Micro Environmental Grant Program (MEG) were launched

The Matched Small Grants Programme (MSGP) is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The MSGP finances small scale projects that focus on the key environmental problems in the Caspian Region through practical and

concrete measures. The MEG is an opportunity to apply for micro grants from minimum scale to USD 3,000 to raise public awareness of the environment of the Caspian, which will help you to finance the small-scale projects with a REAL impact to address urgent environmental problems through raising awareness of a number of specific issues including the declining biodiversity, pollution of land near the Caspian and of rivers that flow into the Caspian.

MSGP/MEG training workshops were held in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan

Training workshops were held in Atyrau and Aktau in July 2-3 for potential applicants to the MSGP & MEG. Participants of the workshops were informed and given consultations by CSPCA on the available grants under the CASPECO project, all participants were delivered with the applications and flyers. Training workshops for local communities were held on July 8-10 in coastal regions of Turkmenistan, namely in Hazar, Esenguly and Turkmenbashi. About 40 organizations such as Turkmen NGOs, community-based organizations, institutions as well as local government bodies were represented in these workshops. Workshops participants were familiarized with the CASPECO project activities in general and its grant package and grant procedures.

CASPECO Project Interim Manager Mr. H.Ghaffarzadeh participated as an observer in the Thirtieth Session of the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea

Thirtieth Session of the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea was held in Anzali, Iran on July 15, 2009. Interim CASPECO Project Manager Mr H.Ghaffarzadeh took part as an observer in the CAB session, where he presented a brief on the CEP and TCIS processes in general and on the CASECO Project in particular focusing on bioresources management issues. To develop cooperation between two regional organizations and create a partnership conduction of 'Meeting of Minds" was offered to the Commission. 'Meeting of Minds" can gather technical experts representing the littoral countries environment and bioresources management sectors to explore ways and means to enhance and strengthen their collaboration towards ecosystem - based approach to the management of bioresources benefiting , inter alia from resources available to the CASPECO project.

Caspian Stakeholders Data Base updating began

The Caspian Stakeholders Database (CSD) will be used as a main tool for networking with the Caspian Stakeholders, which includes nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, academic bodies, media, local authorities and likewise. It will help us to improve communication with and between the major stakeholders and create Partnerships in order to enhance and strengthen representation of the civil society in the context of the Tehran Convention implementation. To update the CSD a registration form is developed and placed on the CASPECO project website.

Upcoming

The Celebration of the Caspian Day in August 12, 2009 in Astana

Celebration event for Caspian Day will be held in Astana on the 12th of August in order draw public attention to the need to conserve unique Caspian biodiversity and safeguard its environment by celebration of Caspian Day. Children's painting competition and concert programme will be organized at the Central Park in Astana.

Scoping Meeting: Development of Ecosystem Monitoring System Regional Meeting, September 7-8, Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol September 9-10

These two meetings will be held back-to-back in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan to discuss Ecosystem monitoring system issues and the draft LBS protocol. It will be participated by officials from each of the Caspian littoral countries and will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries.

Regional Meeting: Biodiversity Protection Protocol, October 5-7

The Regional Meeting on Biodiversity Protection Protocol will be held on October 5-7 in Baku, Azerbaijan to discuss the draft Biodiversity Protocol. It will be participated by officials from each of the Caspian littoral countries and will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries.

Regional Meeting: Oil Pollution Incidents (OPI), November

The Regional Meeting on Oil Pollution Incidents (OPI) will be held in November at the PMCU in Astana to discuss the draft OPI Protocol.

Regional Meeting of EIA in Transboundary Context Protocol, December

Regional Meeting of EIA in Transboundary Context Protocol is planned to be held in Moscow, Russia on December to discuss the draft EIA Protocol.

General information

Iran and Russia will hold ship transport exercise

Iran and Russia will hold a joint naval exercise in northern Iran to enhance the safety of transportation in the Caspian Sea. The maneuver will be held in the port city of Bandar-e Anzali in northern Iran on July 29, 2009. The maritime exercise will be held within the framework of international conventions such as those on the prevention of sea pollution. He noted that the exercise's theme will be "Regional Interaction, Key to Safe and Clean Caspian Sea." Representatives of the Caspian littoral countries and international organizations will participate in these exercises as the observers. The main objective of the exercise is combating with environmental oil pollution.

Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan hold talks on Caspian Sea boosting European gas pipeline prospects

Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan have begun talks to agree on a border in the energy-rich Caspian Sea, the Turkmen foreign ministry said Thursday, a move that boosts prospects for a Western-backed pipeline project to pump gas to Europe. The feasibility of the Nabucco pipeline — planned to connect eastern Turkey with the lucrative European market — rests heavily on its ability to tap into the Caspian region's vast energy resources. A subsea pipeline under the Caspian linking Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, which stand on its opposite shores, would be a massive boost to Nabucco but faces stiff opposition from Russia, which wants a monopoly on the supply of Central Asian gas to Europe. The proposed Caspian pipeline has also been stalled by boundary disagreements among the five states bordering the sea, which also include Russia, Iran and Kazakhstan. Iran has insisted that each of the five coastal states get an equal portion of the seabed, while most other countries want the division based on shoreline, which would give Iran a smaller share. Talks on the sea border come just days after Turkmenistan's president said his country, which lies on the Caspian's eastern shore, was prepared to provide natural gas for the planned Nabucco pipeline. Russia, meanwhile, has objected to proposals to build trans-Caspian energy transportation routes, citing environmental concerns. Many experts believe, however, that Moscow is seeking to maintain its current lock over Central Asian gas exports to Europe, all of which are currently carried through pipelines in Russia. Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan were until recently mired in a long-standing territorial dispute over claims to rich oil deposits located on the Caspian seabed. However, bilateral ties have been boosted since 2008 by shared interest in developing the trans-Caspian pipeline. Early last year, Azerbaijani state-owned oil company SOCAR hired U.S. firm KBR to conduct a feasibility study for the pipeline route. No findings of the study have yet been announced. In addition to territorial issues, the talks that began Wednesday in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku, between the two countries' deputy foreign ministers are also expected to cover

shipping, fishing and the environment, according to the Turkmen Foreign Ministry. Officials in Azerbaijan have made no comments.

Continuation of consultations on the convergence of views on the legal status of the Caspian Sea

Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan will continue consultations on the convergence of views on the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Bilateral negotiations on the level of deputy foreign ministers of both countries will be held in Ashgabat September 8-9, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Turkmenistan Elkhan Huseynov told Trend News. Delegation headed by the Special Representative of the President of Azerbaijan on the status of the Caspian Sea Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khalaf Khalafov will go to Turkmenistan to participate in the negotiations.



Iran will continue exploration activities in the Caspian Sea

Iranian Oil Minister said 46 oil fields have been identified in the Caspian Sea. Speaking in Amol during inauguration ceremony for the Iranian floating oil platform he said presently 8 oil fields can be utilized. He noted that 2400 sq km have been seismographid and it can be claimed that the Caspian Sea might have 15 milliard cubic meter oil reserves. The minister added that Iran will continue exploration activities without any assistance for foreign countries.

Creative competition “From Khazar to Jiekhun” was held in Turkmenistan

The Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan in partnership with the UNDP project on conservation of biodiversity of Khasar natural reserve and national newspaper “Neutral Turkmenistan” held a Creative Competition in occasion of World Environment Day. Journalists, ecologists, scientists as well as teachers and students participated in the competition, which included nominations like “Khazar”, “Nature and Human”, “Ecological Tourism”. Powerful and lively articles and essays of professional journalists and scientist as well as beautiful photo pictures were presented for competition.

Oil spilled in Volga basin

Release of oil products took place due to the "Shljuzovoj-103" oil tanker wreckage on Monday morning in Syzran district of Samarskaya region. In consequence of wrecking about 2 tons of oil products spilled in Volga. According to the Emergency Ministry data spot length is 12 km, width – 35 metres. Russian Emergency Services conducted liquidation works. Greenpeace representative Mr Ivan Blokov declared that to asses environmental consequences of oil spill in Volga basin is not possible now because of absence of accurate data on quantity of spilled oil.

Crash of a helicopter carrying oil workers

A helicopter from Azerbaijan's state airline, AzAL, crashed into the Caspian Sea on July 12 in the afternoon while carrying oil workers and a flight crew. The accident involving the Mi-8 helicopter occurred at around 4.30 p.m. near the Gunashli field, which is part of the major Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (ACG) offshore oil fields. Six people - three crew members and three oil workers - were on board at the time of the crash. One of them was killed in the accident, while four - the captain, the second pilot, the mechanic and an oil worker - have been rescued. Search for the other oil worker that is presumably dead is underway. The Prosecutor-General's Office has launched a criminal case, and an ad hoc group of investigators has been set up.

More than two hundred dead seals found at Kazakhstan coast of the Caspian Sea

May 13. Kazakhstan Today - 218 hundred dead seals have been found at Kazakhstan coast of the Caspian Sea, the agency reports citing the press service of the Ministry of Emergency of Kazakhstan. According to the press service, dead animals have been found in Bautino in 25 kilometers from Shevchenko city. All animals died in winter. All the necessary measures are being undertaken to establish the reasons of seals' death. As it was informed earlier, high mor of seals in the Caspian Sea occurs now even more frequently. 8 cases were officially registered in the second half of the last century, but at least three cases have been already in the first decade of this century. In 2000 about 30 thousand Caspian seals died. There have been found more than 10 thousand dead seals at the Kazakhstan coast. Many dead animals have been washed away by winds from the northern water area of the Caspian Sea to the southern. Chronic toxicosis was named as the reason of death: the products of decomposition of crude oil, furnace and black sea oil, and pesticides were found in the animals that led to substantial lowering of immunity in seals and increase of susceptibility to infectious diseases.