



## Editorial for the Special Issue on Water Use Management Challenges in Central Asia and Afghanistan

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Water resources management is an indispensable element for development and welfare improvement in Central Asia (CA) and Afghanistan. Due to economic hardships related to independence in 1991, water infrastructure and water supply services (urban, rural and irrigation) in CA have not been well maintained, while at the same time reforms in different sectors triggered the need for updated and more nuanced services [1].

In Afghanistan, continuous warfare as well as population pressure have hindered new investments in water infrastructure and maintenance. Limited drinking water services, inefficient agricultural water supply and lack of funding are some of the major constraints met in the region. Climate change is also a future challenge that needs to be considered in future water resources plans.

The young research and academic community of CA and Afghanistan is nowadays actively engaged in water resource management initiatives leading to relevant policy studies. Young researchers and academics are closely interacting with international projects [2,3]. Policymakers from national and international agencies are advised by the academic community in CA and Afghanistan on water resources management policies on a national and regional level [4]. However, the young research and academic community is not always well equipped with the state-of-the-art structural and conceptual background required for the formulation, presentation and discussion of the research outputs in international fora [5].

Being aware of the existing situation, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan in cooperation with the German Kazakh University (GKU) in Kazakhstan supported a 5-day training on the capacity building of young researchers and professionals in conducting research for water policy studies and disseminating their outcomes according to international standards. The aim of the training course was the enhancement of the young scientific community in CA and Afghanistan in the writing of research studies related to water resources management issues of the region. The training course took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan at 3-7 October 2016.

Twenty (20) participants from the region – including Afghanistan – doing their research on water-related topics attended the event. The course gave the participants better insight on how to submit their work in peer reviewed international means of dissemination. Moreover, an agreement was made with the German Kazakh University (GKU) for the publication of the most competent researches in a Special Issue to be prepared for the Central Asia Journal of Water Research (CAJWR). The OSCE Office has provided mentorship services to the candidate authors by the Workshop trainers to ensure the development of the participants' studies for the CAJWR Journal.

The Special Issue also welcomed studies on major challenges traced in water resources in CA and Afghanistan through indicative examples from the entire region. Topics within the issue cover water supply and demand in urban, agricultural and industrial sector, surface and groundwater use, water management and awareness, climate change and variability effects and other issues pointing at the current limitations of water resources in Central Asia. Also, the Special Issue invited studies from other regions that may face similar conditions on water resources use to showcase water management practices that could apply in Central Asia.

## References

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