Building trust among Central Asian countries: Any role to play for the cooperation on wildlife protection?

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Central Asian countries: cooperation context

Unequal regional share of energetic and water resources:

- Highly dependent economy on single-crop farming by down-stream countries
- Dependence on hydropower by up-stream countries

Unsustainable model for environment and for human development (ex: Aral Sea disaster)

- Competitive relation between countries
- Competitive use between resources
The Nexus (energy-food-water-ecosystems)

Concept: **Water, food, energy and ecosystem are interconnected. Without coordination those sectors tend to compete**

- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention)
  - Overall objective: “prevent, control and reduce any transboundary impact” -art.2-, by...
  - preventing, controlling and reducing pollution
  - ecological sound water management
  - reasonable and equitable use of water
  - ensuring conservation and restoration of ecosystems

- In 2012 the parties of the Water Convention adopted the Nexus approach:
  - Task Force on Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystem Nexus
  - Inclusion of “Ecosystems” in the scope of the Nexus
  - Assessment of the Nexus in a set of transboundary basins
The Nexus (energy-food-water-ecosystems)

Transboundary basin assessment process:

Analysis through 2 complementary perspectives:
- Technical analysis
- Governance analysis

Process:
1. (mostly desk-based)
   a. Socioeconomic context
   b. Key sectors & key actors
   c. Analysis of key sectors
2. (engagement of regional stakeholders: workshops)
   a. Intersectoral issues
   b. Nexus dialogue
   c. Solutions and benefits
In sum, what does the Nexus approach offers?

- More equitable dialogue across sectors
- Allows for a more effective application of the Water Convention: reducing the "transboundary impacts"
There is any role to play for the cooperation on wildlife protection?
Wildlife in Central Asia

Biodiversity hotspot:
- Snow leopard, argali, Siberian ibex, saiga antelope, Bukhara deer...
- “Few remaining regions in the world where ecologically important large mammals’ migrations can be still observed” (UNEP/CMS)

Challenges for biodiversity and wildlife:
- Illegal hunting (aggravated by the Eurasian Custom Union)
- Overgrazing
- Expansion of human settlements
- Installation of border fences

Opportunities
- “Sustainable consumptive and non-consumptive uses (trophy hunting, nature tourism) can create commercial opportunities and provide further economic, social and environmental benefits” (Mischeler, 2006)
Legal framework of wildlife management cooperation

International treaties
- Members of CBD
- CITES* (*except Turkmenistan)
- CMS* (*except Turkmenistan)

Cooperation on protection of wildlife:
- CMS framework: **Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)**
  - MOU Concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (2006)
- CMS & CITES framework: **Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program**
- ...
Restrains for an effective cooperation

Restrains to the effectivity of those projects due to other uses of resources that have transboundary effects:

- Building of linear infrastructures: pipelines, channels, power lines, etc
- Increasing use of land for grazing
- Over-exploitation of forests
- Agricultural expansion
- Drying of wetlands due to dam construction
- Habitat change due to climate change

BUT

No application of the Nexus approach in the framework of the CBD, CITIES or CMS
Conclusions

- The different sectors of cooperation included in the Nexus are like "communicating vessels"
- The Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus approach is becoming mainstream in transboundary resources management
- Using the "Nexus approach" in the regional protection of wildlife of Central Asia would create synergies and make more effective the international cooperation on water, energy and food security