



The Aral Sea Basin Management Model

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After the collapse of the Soviet Union the newly independent states of Central Asia were confronted with the necessity of developing a new framework of decision making for allocation of the scarce water resources of the Aral Sea Basin. A key role in the development of this framework has been played by the Scientific Information Centre (SIC) of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), which was established on the basis of a decision of countries of the Aral Basin in the early nineties. Essential elements of the framework were produced by the development of regional databases such as WARMAP and WUFMAS and the development of common monitoring programs for the rivers and water bodies of the basin.

Towards the end of the nineties this data framework has formed the basis for development of hydrological models that allowed advanced analysis of water use scenarios in the basin and also served the requirements of the River Basin Management Organizations of the region to develop their water allocation models. The Aral Sea Basin Management Model (ASBMM) for the first time combined socio-economic and demographic development models for the region, the Globesight Models, with the hydrological models in support of decision making for water allocation of the region. This work has been continued and the ASBMM has been widely used to train regional water management experts in water allocation issues and water allocation scenario's. The paper will show the development of the ASBMM in the historical perspective of the growing need for information and interstate decision capacity and explain how the model has been influential to further work in IWRM in the region.