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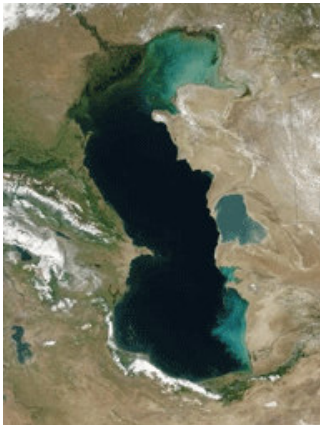
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# Caspian Water Quality Monitoring and Action Plan for Areas of Pollution Concern Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan 'Caspian MAP'

## Countries:

Caspian littoral countries;  
Azerbaijan, Russian  
Federation, Kazakhstan,  
Turkmenistan and as guest  
country IRAN

**The Caspian countries find it important to protect the ecosystems in the Caspian they share. DHV from the Netherlands is providing assistance to these countries to develop a Regional Water Quality Monitoring Programme, and a Pollution Action Plan for specific areas. These EU financed activities are in support of the wider Caspian Environment Programme.**



## Project number:

Tacis/2005/109244

## Client:

European Commission,  
Europe Aid

## Project duration:

2.5 years from November  
27th 2006 till May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## Office:

National Institute of Deserts  
Flora & Fauna  
Building 59 # 2011 (Old name:  
Azadi Street), Ashgabat  
744000, Turkmenistan  
Tel: +993 12 353653  
Fax: +993 12 353469  
[www.caspianmap.org](http://www.caspianmap.org)  
[Info@caspianmap.org](mailto:Info@caspianmap.org)

## Project description

Regular water quality monitoring is important to understand the status of the environment and the ecosystems in the Caspian. Regular monitoring is also important to detect trends. Trends tell what the impacts are of new developments (new industries, oil exploration and extraction, etc), but also the effects of the policies to protect the Caspian.

During Soviet times monitoring was done on a regular basis. After the collapse of the Soviet Union this task was left for four newly independent states. The institutional restructuring and the economic hardship in most of these countries resulted in a deterioration of environmental monitoring systems during the nineties. Monitoring degraded through a lack of resources, poor technical and analytical capacities but also a lack of co-operation and data exchange.

Within the framework of the Caspian Environment Programme/ Teheran Convention the countries around the Caspian have committed themselves to create joint management structures for the environmental management of the Caspian, and to come to a Regional Water Quality Monitoring Programme as one of the specific activities.

This project assists the littoral countries in the design of a new Regional Water Quality Monitoring Programme, and thereby contributes to an improved quality of the marine and coastal environment of the Caspian. It also assists the countries in developing pollution action plans for specific areas of pollution concern.



**DHV B.V.**  
 Laan 1914 no. 35  
 3818 EX Amersfoort  
 P.O. Box 1132  
 3800 BC Amersfoort  
 The Netherlands  
 T +31 33 4682000  
 F +31 33 4682801  
 E [info@dhv.nl](mailto:info@dhv.nl)  
[www.dhv.com](http://www.dhv.com)

## Activities

The project 's activities include

1. the development of an enhanced Regional Water Quality Monitoring Programme, including the agreement of key monitoring locations, harmonized methodologies, indicators, protocols and administration/management arrangements as well as data reporting and data exchange procedures;
2. The organisation of cruises with the four participating countries to collect and analyse water and sediment samples;
3. an assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the laboratories in the region through an intercalibration exercise with international laboratories;
4. an assessment of pollution areas of concern ("hot spots"), the updating of pollution assessments and the identification, prioritization and costing of remediation actions;
5. capacity building through training and workshops

## Results

The project made an in-depth assessment of current monitoring practices and capabilities of the environmental laboratories in the region. The results were discussed and presented at the first regional workshop, held February 2008 in Ashgabat.

On the basis of this assessment an intercalibration exercise was designed. Samples from the Caspian were sent for analysis to laboratories of the littoral Caspian countries, and to three international reference labs. The results of these analyses were presented during the Second Regional workshop, held in July in Atyrau in Kazakhstan.

The results of the Intercalibration exercise allows laboratories to prepare themselves to work with the samples they will receive from the cruises that will be organised in every country. The cruises will take place in September and October 2008.

A baseline inventory has been made of the Land based Pollution Sources with (potential) impact on the Caspian. Sources are now being prioritized and an activity schedule for preparation of pre-feasibility studies for selected priority sites has been prepared.

The project is looking into the possibilities of modelling pollution loads that the Caspian receives.

