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The NATO Science for Peace
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Assessing Transboundary Water Pollution in Central Asia (ref. 983945)

This project is a regional collaboration between scientists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, together with researchers from Norway, in order to perform an in-depth study of contaminants selected by the participating countries in the basin of the Syr-Darya river. The Central Asian Republics jointly utilize Syr-Darya river basin and its divides, and they share common issues in regards to industrial, agricultural and municipal river pollution. This river supplies water for direct human use, and therefore both social and economic development in the region is related to the quality of this water resource. As both political and ethnic instability in the region may be exacerbated by water disputes, there is an established link between maintaining a viable, high-quality freshwater resource with future defense of the region. The key objectives are to follow the concentration of nine key heavy metals in the Syr-Darya river systems over a period of three years in order to assess variation in contamination levels and the extent of transboundary transport of these metals between the Central Asian countries, as well as to lay the foundation for a permanent joint water monitoring programme in the region.

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