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Experts' Perceptions of Water Security in Central Asia: Results from a Delphi Study

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Description / Abstract

Water security in Central Asia has been discussed by researchers and international organizations using hydrological, engineering, and modeling approaches. Various frameworks conceptualize water security through technical, socio-economic, and environmental aspects. This study attempts to identify the current trends of perceptions of experts about water security in Central Asian countries and Afghanistan as assessed through different regional and international experts with relevant knowledge and experience. The experts originate from diverse professional backgrounds like ministries, NGOs, international organizations, research, and academic institutes. The analysis was conducted through the Delphi approach, which has been widely used to identify experts' views by reaching a consensus on various subjects. The Delphi method assisted in the elicitation of experts' opinions about different water security dimensions in the overall region and each Central Asia country that have been suggested from the relevant literature. The two-round questionnaire was developed to infer the experts' views (round 1) on water security in Central Asia and then identify the agreement's rate with the initial findings (round 2). The results have shown that, while the relevant scientific literature gives priority to environmental factors, the experts emphasize water security's economic aspects. Experts suggested including transboundary challenges, legislative and institutional weaknesses in assessing water security in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Respondents highlighted the low effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the current institutions and mechanisms that dealt with water security-related issues in Central Asia and suggested strengthening water governance in the region.

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