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## **ARAL SEA RESTORATION EFFORTS TO INCLUDE PLANTING MILLION-HECTARE SAXAUL FOREST**

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17.06.2021

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Astana Times (17 June 2021)

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Saxaul trees will be planted on one million hectares of the drained bottom of the Aral Sea on the territory of Kazakhstan as part of the new effort to stop dust storms in the region, reported the Central Communications Service on June 15.

The decision was made after a delegation of the Kazakh Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources visited Uzbekistan to study their experience in combating desertification of the Aral Sea. Uzbekistans recent accomplishment includes successfully planting and growing saxaul on the bottom of the Aral Sea. The Uzbek efforts resulted in trees taking roots over 1.2 million hectares of the sandy territory.

We would like to learn from this experience to make sure that the one-time measures taking place in different locations have a synergistic effect. Now our ministry is developing a program to solve this problem of dust storms once and for all by systematically approaching it. Different types of plantings will be used including both aerial seeding and mechanized planting. We are currently looking for alternative sources of funding outside the state budget to involve all interested parties, said Vice Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Aliya Shalabekova.

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