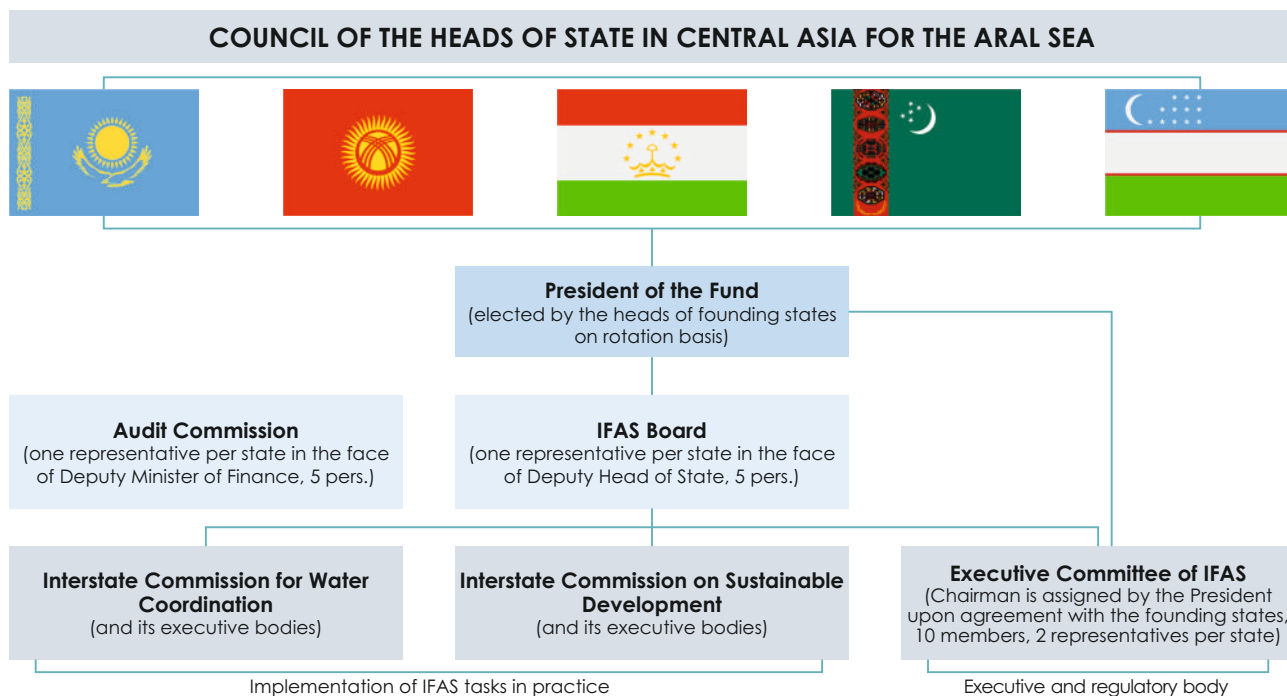


## Section 3

# IFAS and Other Regional Organizations in Central Asia

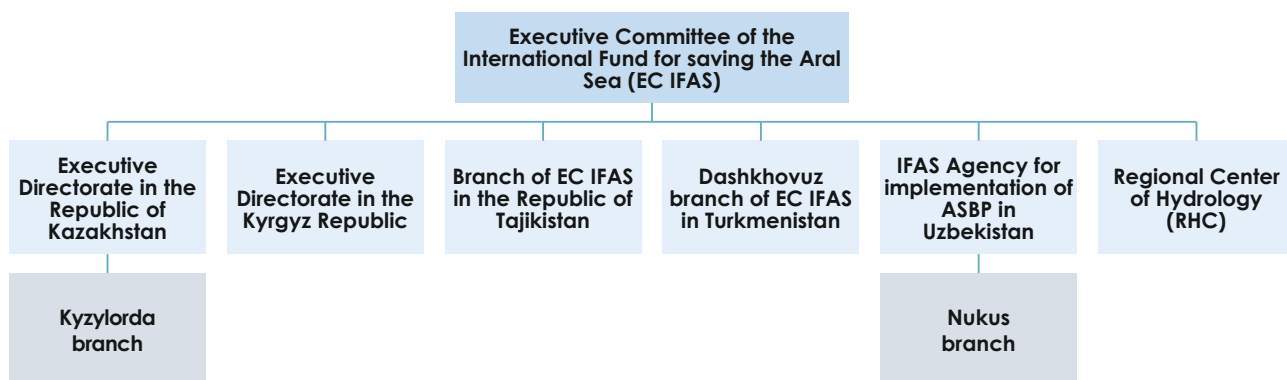
**The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)** was established by a decision of the Heads of CA states on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1993 with the aim of developing and funding environmental and research and applied

projects and programs in order to improve ecological situation in the areas affected by the Aral Sea catastrophe and address the socio-economic issues in the region. The organizational structure of IFAS is shown below.



### 3.1. Executive Committee of IFAS and its Country Branches

The **Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS)** was formed following a decision of the Interstate Council of the 13<sup>rd</sup> of July 1993. It serves as a platform for dialogue between the CA countries and the international community.



Location of EC IFAS by Country and Year



On 16 June, the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan approved a package of documents related to the Turkmenistan's chairmanship in IFAS over 2017-2019.

The main objective of Turkmenistan's [chairmanship in IFAS](#) is to further develop and strengthen cooperation among the countries in the Aral Sea basin for socio-economic and ecological improvement in the Prearalie, efficient water use and better environmental protection in the region. This objective to be achieved within the practical implementation of SDGs.

Under its chairmanship in IFAS, Turkmenistan will:

- promote representation of the Fund on the international arena and its positive role in global processes on sustainable development;
- develop, together with the CA countries, a new fourth phase of the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4);
- initiate elaboration of the Central Asian Water Strategy, which could serve as a basis for the UN Global Water Strategy in the future;
- prepare and send to all founding member countries of IFAS proposals for the revision of the Regional Action Plan for

Environmental Protection in Central Asia (REAP).

Under the IFAS chairmanship the following events have been conducted:

**On 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2017** premises of the IFAS Executive Committee were officially opened in Ashkhabad and the [International conference](#) "The role of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea in developing cooperation in the Central Asian region" was held;

**On November 3-4** a [workshop](#) on integrated water resources management was organized by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC);

**On November 13-14** the [6<sup>th</sup> meeting](#) of CA regional organizations working on sustainable development and water management issues was held. [Memorandums](#) of cooperation were signed between the IFAS Executive Committee and the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) represented by Transboundary Water Management Program in Central Asia and with CAREC;

The first [Day of the Amu Darya](#) took place in Lebap province **in November**;

**On 19<sup>th</sup> of December** a [workshop](#) on international water law was held in Ashkhabad.

### 3.1.1. Regional Center of Hydrology

**The Regional Center of Hydrology (RCH) at EC IFAS** was established on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2002 in line with a decision of the IFAS Board to improve the system of hydrometeorological forecasts, environmental monitoring and data exchange between the national hydrometeorological services (NHMS) in the region.

In 2011-2017, RCH implemented a World Bank supported project (\$M27) on modernization of hydrometeorological services in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (PMHMS). The objective of the project was to improve quality and timeliness of hydrometeorological services in CA.

In 2017, the COSMO-CA software was developed and passed to UzHydromet (Uzbek Hydrometeorological Service) for beta testing in the interests of four HMS' in CA. As a result,

accuracy of weather forecasts has been substantially improved and averaged 94.7%. 13 gauging stations in Kyrgyzstan and 16 stations in Tajikistan have been modernized and re-equipped.

NHMS' of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were equipped with automated workstations for the system of hydrological information visualization. Hydrometeorological data at NHMS' of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were digitized for long-term storage and to ensure timely access.

As a result of the project activities, the users of hydrometeorological information were provided with new high-quality information products.

*Source: RCH*

### 3.1.2. Executive Directorate of IFAS in Kazakhstan

**The Executive Directorate (ED) of IFAS** renders assistance in addressing topical issues and coordinating measures to improve water-related, socio-economic and environmental situation in the Kazakh part of the Aral Sea basin. ED IFAS together with international organizations implemented 47 projects under ASBP-3 for a total amount of \$543,950. In 2017, it continued implementing **four projects** for an amount of \$64,000.

**Advancement of Kazakhstan's legislation on safety of hydrotechnical facilities.** In 2017, with the support of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, a work meeting was organized to discuss the results of expert review and recommendations on the development of Kazakh legislation on safety of hydrotechnical facilities as part of the International Conference "Transboundary cooperation in Central Asia – security, stability, and well-being of the whole region" held on 7-8 September in Almaty.

In December 2017, the Government of Kazakhstan approved a proposition to enact a law on safety of hydrotechnical facilities in Kazakhstan. The national Parliament planned a round-table in early 2018 to discuss the matters concerning adoption of the Law, taking into account a need for establishment of a freestanding supervisory body with the diagnostic center and expert council (from Russian and Uzbek experience).

**Capacity building.** Support was provided to the International Education Center (IEC) on safety of hydrotechnical facilities at the Kazakh Water Research Institute (KazNIIVH) in Taraz and to the Training Center of the Aralo-Syr Darya Basin Council (TC ASBC) at the Kazakh Rice Growing Research Institute (KazNII) in Kyzylorda (see "[Water education](#)").

In 2017, with the financial support of the UNECE Project "Dam safety in Central Asia: capacity building and regional cooperation" and the EU Project "Supporting Kazakhstan's transition to a Green Economy model over 2016-2018", 68 specialists from Kazakhstan and neighboring countries got training and received certificates at IEC.

Two training workshops were organized at TC ASBC:

- Training for improving knowledge of local population about the basics of small and medium sized businesses as part of preparation to the International Forum on sustainable development in the Aral region "Aral-2017", 6-11 February, Aralsk, Kazalinsk;
- Practical training for farmers in the Aral-Syr Darya Basin in advanced agro-technology and water saving, 29-30 June, Kyzylorda.

ED IFAS is involved in the projects that have training components:

- Project "IWRM, sustainable development and education standards for higher educational institutions", component IV "Drafting proposals on state education standards for preparation of water engineers" implemented by the OSCE Programme office in Astana;
- The Skills and Jobs Project with the technical and financial support of World Bank together with German-Kazakh University (GKU) and other national higher educational institutions.

**Outreach activities on the Aral Sea problem.** Making the world community aware of the Aral Sea problems is one of ED IFAS focus areas. In 2017 they organized:

- First International Aral Forum on sustainable development, with the resulting resolution, 30-31 May, Kyzylorda;
- Scientific-applied expedition along the exposed seabed of the Aral Sea, during which ecology, flora and fauna, hydro-meteorology and hydrology, and soil studies were undertaken, 15-25 May, Prearalie, Aralsk

**Cooperation.** In 2017, ED IFAS took part in 60 national, regional, and international events (research/practice conferences, work meetings, training workshops, roundtables, Basin Councils, etc.).

*Source:* ED IFAS in Kazakhstan, [www.kazaral.org](http://www.kazaral.org)

### 3.1.3. IFAS Agency for implementation of the Aral Sea Basin and GEF projects

The IFAS Agency was established in 1998 during the period of Uzbekistan's chairmanship in EC IFAS. The Agency provides project management in the Aral Sea Basin.

In 2017, implementation of a Comprehensive Program for mitigation of consequences of the Aral catastrophe, rehabilitation and socio-economic development in the Prearalie region over 2015-2018 was continued. The annual program budget is \$M500-700. A number of projects are undertaken under the Program. Particularly, the most important project – Construction of small local water bodies in the Amu Darya Delta, Phase 2 – provides for construction and reconstruction of 12 structures (dams, offtake regulators, diversion canals, side spillways, etc.). The total project cost is 131.37 billion soum (or about \$M90 at 2016 values). By the end of 2019, it is planned to construct fish-breeding water bodies and pastures on the total area of 28,250 ha and 153,000 ha, respectively.

The Project “Ornithological monitoring of lakes in Southern Prearalie” was also continued in 2017. The Project aims to study and assess the environmental conditions and biodiversity in

deltaic lakes through ornithological expeditions. Over 2015-2017, more than 230 bird species were recorded in the Sudochie Lake and included 12 endangered species and 3 species in the Red Book of Uzbekistan. In 2017, flamingo rookeries were observed in many places in Karakalpakstan: Vozrozhdeniye Island, Muynak, West Karateren Lake, Shegekul (Mezhdureche Reservoir), Sarykamysh and Zhylytyrbars lakes, and Amu Darya Right-Bank.

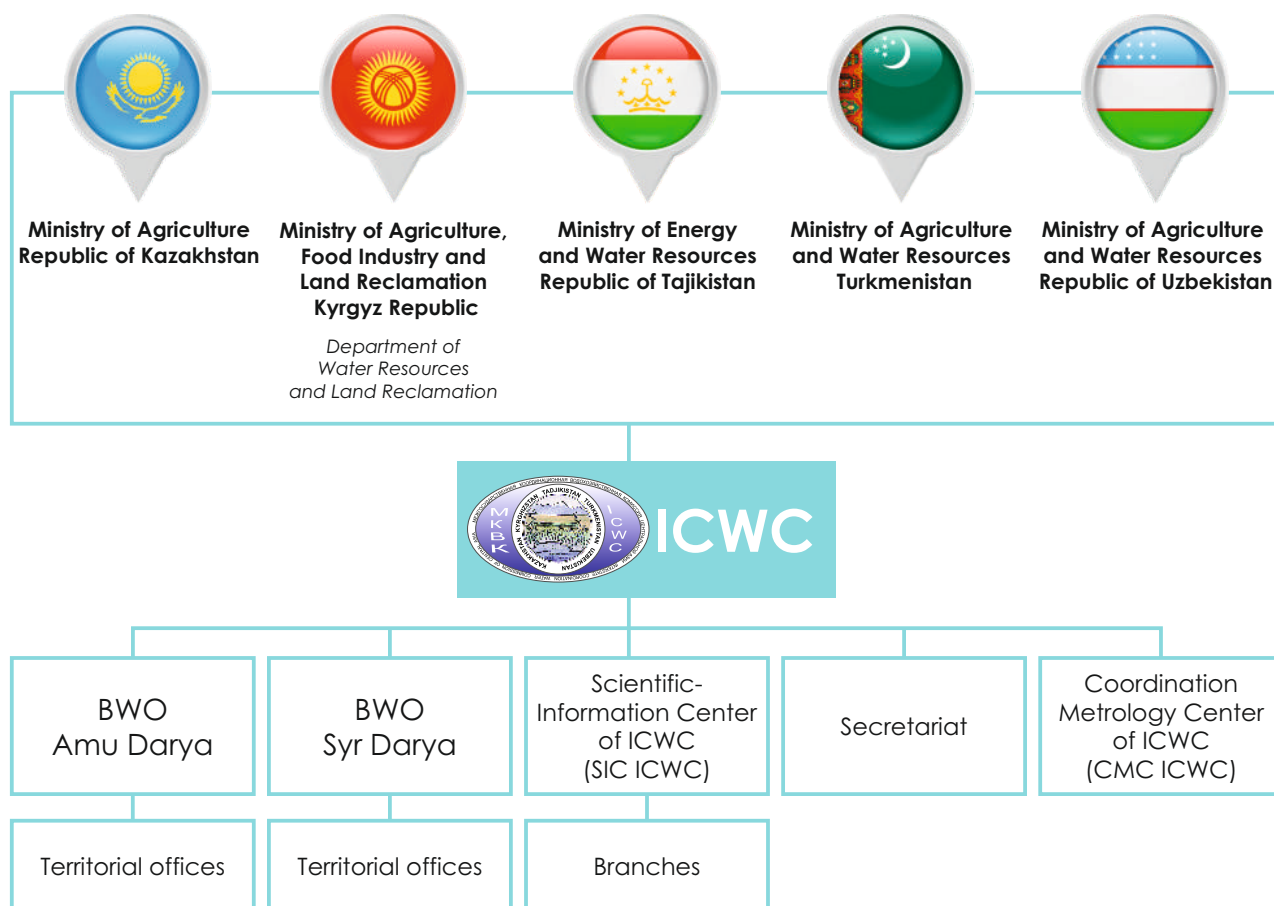
The Comprehensive Program also includes the on-going projects on protective afforestation in the Akhantay site and on the Akkum ridge within the dried bed of the Aral Sea. Such afforestation is to prevent salt and dust transfer and fix shifting sand on the dried seabed. However, as the past experience of forest plantation showed, natural establishment was less than 10%. In this context, the IFAS Agency drafted a Memorandum on cooperation together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Uzbekistan and the Karakalpakstan's Committee of Forestry to improve quality of forest plantation work and monitoring.

Source: The IFAS Agency, [www.aral.uz/a5.php](http://www.aral.uz/a5.php)

## 3.2. ICWC of Central Asia

**Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (ICWC)** is a regional body of the CA states that deals with the issues related to control, efficient use and protection of water from the interstate sources of the Aral Sea basin and implements jointly developed

programs on the basis of cooperation and mutual respect for the parties' interests. The Commission was formed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1992. The organizational set-up of ICWC is shown in the figure below.



### 3.2.1. ICWC meetings

ICWC meetings are held on a quarterly basis and, if necessary, extraordinary meetings can be gathered upon an initiative of any party.

The Commission held four meetings in 2017: 69<sup>th</sup> meeting on 26 January in Ashkhabad; 70<sup>th</sup> meeting on 11 April in Tashkent; 71<sup>st</sup> meeting on 7 July in Dushanbe; and, 72<sup>nd</sup> (jubilee) meeting on 24 November in Tashkent. ICWC members from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>, as well as executive bodies (SIC

ICWC, Secretariat of ICWC, BWO Amu Darya and BWO Syr Darya) and invited persons took part in those meetings.

**Issues addressed.** The main items on the agenda of the meetings were the limits of water withdrawals and the operation regimes of reservoir cascades in the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya basins. The Commission considered and approved forecasts and water limits and reviewed their implementation for growing

<sup>1</sup> Since the 68<sup>th</sup> meeting, representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic have not taken part in ICWC activity.

(2016 and 2017) and non-growing (2016-2017 and 2017-2018) seasons. Interests of the parties in improvement and upgrade of gauging stations in the Syr Darya basin as a whole, a need to mobilize donors for support of installation of automated stations at gauging stations and continue work of BWO Syr Darya on closing the difference between the forecast and actual water availability were underlined. BWO Amu Darya was requested to regulate, in coordination with the Turkmen and Uzbek sides, water releases from the Tuyamuyun reservoir

during the growing season of 2017, depending on actual water availability. Jubilee events were organized on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ICWC, where distinguished water sector workers from the region's countries were awarded memorial signs. Activities and annual results of ICWC working groups on the four directions of strengthening ICWC activities were considered as well.

For more details, please, see:  
[http://icwc-aral.uz/meetings\\_ru.htm](http://icwc-aral.uz/meetings_ru.htm)

### 3.2.2. Jubilee events on the occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ICWC

2017 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICWC work on promoting the interstate water cooperation in CA.

Several [events were organized as part of the ICWC anniversary celebrations](#) in the course of 2017. Those included the International Scientific and Practical Conference "Challenges and Prospects of Effective Water Management against the Backdrop of Globalization" (11-12 April 2017, Tashkent), International Scientific and Practical Conference "Transboundary Cooperation in Central Asia Sustainability and Prosperity of the Region" (7 September 2017, Almaty), International Conference "Blue Peace Central Asia: Dialogue for 2030 - Water Security and Inclusive Growth" (18-20 June 2017, Astana), Regional consultations of the High-Level Panel on Water: International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028 and Valuing Water Initiative (June, Dushanbe), as well as meetings of working groups on the Implementation Plan on strengthening ICWC activities (6 June 2017 in Ashkhabad, 4-5 September 2017 in Tashkent, and 7 September 2017 in Almaty).

The final jubilee [Central Asian International Scientific and Practical Conference "The 25 years of Water Cooperation in Central Asia: Lessons Learnt and Future Outlook"](#) was held on 23-24 November 2017 in the city of Tashkent. The Conference was attended by the heads of water-management organizations of Central Asian countries, as well as by more than 200 experts and leading scientists of the water sector and representatives of international organizations and financing institutions. The most important conclusion of the Conference was the recognition of a fundamental role the ICWC of Central Asia played in establishing and maintaining regional water cooperation and

the adopted [Resolution](#) setting directions of future actions in the region.

On the occasion of the anniversary, the awards were presented to more than 100 specialists of country water sectors in the Aral Sea basin. The Central Asian International [Exhibition](#) "Water Technologies and Industry WATER-2017" was organized as part of the Conference. The exhibition showcased best practices and scientific achievements in the field of water use and protection and on promotion of innovations for sustainable water management.

The main *topics* of the Conference and jubilee events were formulated in line with 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the focus areas of the Implementation Plan on strengthening ICWC activities and the themes of the 8th World Water Forum and included: (I) Transboundary water cooperation as an important driver of food, energy, and environmental security in Central Asia; (II) IWRM, water security and climate change; (III) Water saving and water accounting; (IV) Water and ecosystems; and, (V) Information, knowledge and capacity.

Particular attention was paid to encouraging young water professionals to address the water use related issues.

For more details, please, visit:  
<http://icwc-aral.uz/25years/index.htm>



### 3.2.3. ICWC working groups

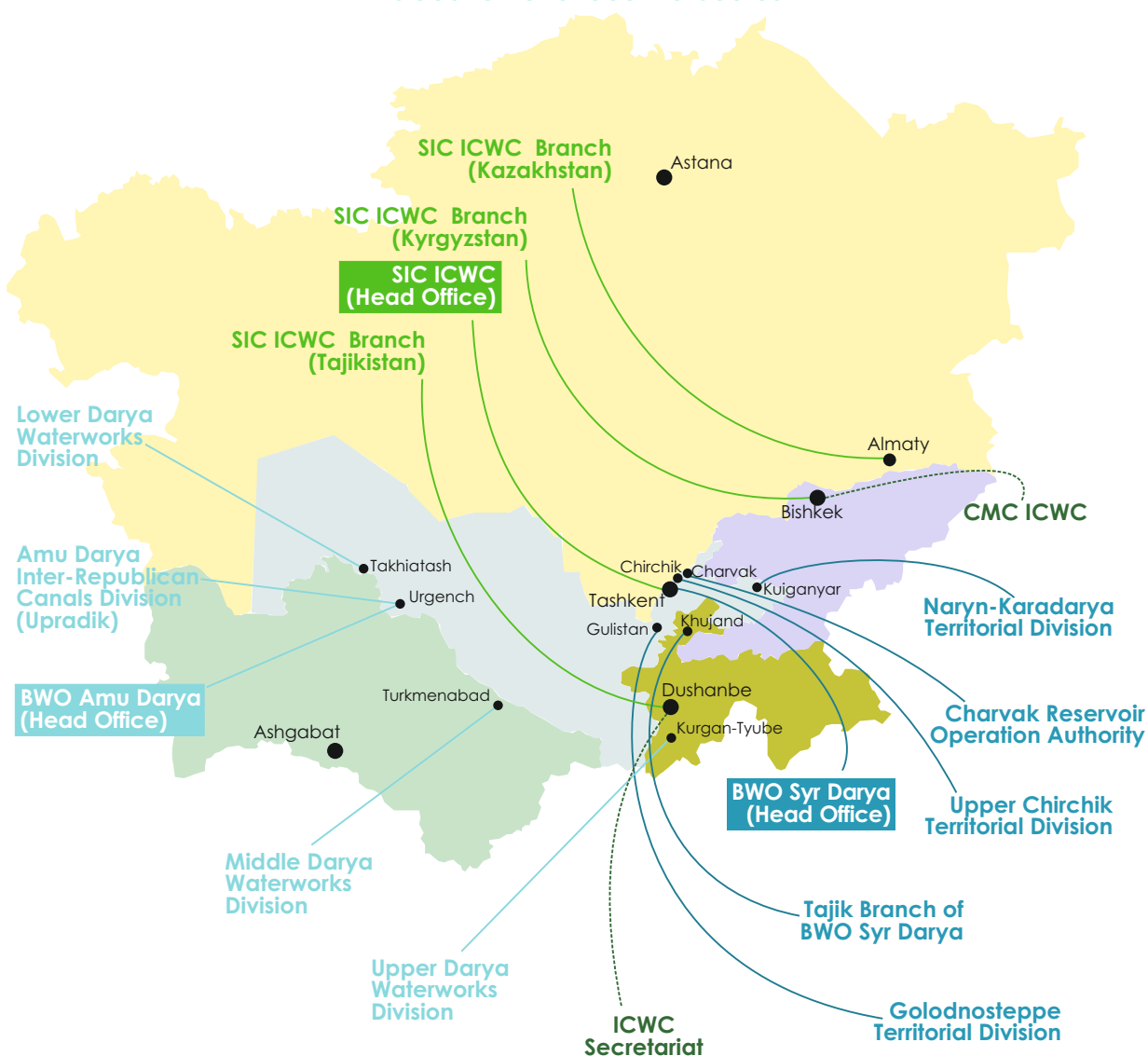
In 2017, representatives of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan<sup>2</sup> intensified their work on the Implementation Plan to strengthen ICWC activities that was adopted at the 63<sup>rd</sup> ICWC meeting<sup>3</sup> on April 18-19, 2014. Four meetings of the working groups were held on the main directions of the Plan, namely: water conservation (6 June, Ashkhabad); implementation of integrated water resource management and adaptation to climate change (4 September, Tashkent); building capacity of regional and national organizations (5 September, Tashkent); improvement of water accounting quality and accuracy (7-8 September, Almaty).

Progress of the four working groups was reported at the 72<sup>nd</sup> ICWC meeting, emphasizing the need to work more actively on water conservation, water accounting, and capacity building of water professionals. Additionally, the meeting noted that it would be advisable to organize a network of representative demonstration plots on an area of 50 ha each in all the countries of the Aral Sea basin. It was decided to request donors to develop a common program to support the Plan.

For more details, please, see: [http://icwc-aral.uz/work\\_plan\\_ru.htm](http://icwc-aral.uz/work_plan_ru.htm)

### 3.2.4. Activities of ICWC executive bodies in 2017

Dislocation of executive bodies



<sup>2</sup> Republic of Tajikistan temporarily refrains from being involved in the fulfillment of this plan (as written in the decision of 70<sup>th</sup> ICWC meeting).

<sup>3</sup> April 18-19 2014, Tashkent

**BWO Amu Darya and BWO Syr Darya** ensure real-time control of water allocation among the states in the basin, timely and trouble-free supply of water to users according to the established water limits (agreed by the states) and sanitary-ecological releases of water to Prearalie zone and the Aral Sea.

**BWO Amu Darya** is located in Urgench and has 4 territorial divisions: Upper Darya (Tajikistan); Middle Darya (Turkmenistan); Lower Darya (Uzbekistan); and Dashoguz Administration (Turkmenistan).

In 2017, BWO Amu Darya continued working on interstate water allocation and real-time control over observance of the established water withdrawal limits, on modernization and operation of waterworks facilities under responsibility of BWO, and prepared materials for and participated in four ICWC meetings, as well as in the Central Asian Conference “The 25 years of Water Cooperation in Central Asia: Lessons Learnt and Future Outlook” and a meeting of water managers of lower reaches on water allocation.

In 2017, BWO Amu Darya organized the Day of Amu Darya, with the support of GIZ, in Kurgant'yube (Tajikistan), Turkmenabad (Turkmenistan), and Urgench (Uzbekistan). This event was timed to coincide with jubilee events dedicated to 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BWO and 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Amu Darya Inter-republican Canals Division (UPRADIK). The web-site of BWO Amu Darya started to be developed and currently is operated in the test mode. The staff of BWO and its territorial divisions took an active part in regional programs, conferences, and training workshops.

BWO cooperates with EC IFAS, Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MEWR) of Tajikistan, National Hydrometeorological Services, SIC ICWC, CAREC, and GIZ.

**BWO Syr Darya** has its headquarters in Tashkent. For trouble- and fault-free supply of water to users, BWO keeps maintenance of hydraulic structures, canals, gauging stations, communication facilities, buildings and other water-management sites that are on the books of territorial divisions.

In 2017, BWO repaired facilities of automated control, calibrated gauging stations and made current repair of the control

station at the Upper Chirchik waterworks facility and the mechanical equipment of the Zakh Canal and the Uchkurgan waterworks facility. It repaired the Dustlik Canal and its offtake, rehabilitated banks of the Zakh and Khanym canals. Mechanical cleaning of canals and structures was done as planned. Reconstruction and modernization of the Upper Chirchik waterworks facility were completed. All repair and construction work was made in line with the state standards. All funds allocated for repair were fully used.

Work is underway on reconstruction of tailwater pool of the largest and important structure – the Kuiganyar waterworks facility which passes 1,210 m<sup>3</sup>/s – constructed in 1939 and damaged in 2010 due to heavy floods. Reconstruction of the Kuiganyar waterworks facility will ensure reliable operation of the latter in the long-term and guarantee water supply for 230,000 ha in the Fergana Valley.

**ICWC Secretariat** formed by the decision of the 6<sup>th</sup> ICWC meeting on 10 October 1993 and located in Dushanbe supervises fulfillment of ICWC decisions, prepares together with other executive bodies agendas, events and draft decisions for ICWC meetings and coordinates international communication.

### Scientific-Information Center of ICWC

SIC ICWC was established on 5 December 1992. The headquarters of SIC ICWC is located in Tashkent, with the branches in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Center provides ICWC with organizational and technical support, information and analytics, capacity building, international communications, scientific research and expert advise.

### Organizational and technical activity

In 2017, SIC together with other bodies of ICWC was involved in preparation and organization of four ICWC meetings. SIC held meetings of the regional working groups on the Implementation Plan on strengthening ICWC activities and prepared summary reports. Also analytical reports on water management situation in the region during growing and non-growing seasons were prepared. SIC took active part in organization of the Anniversary conference of ICWC. The Center rendered assistance to national and regional agencies through timely provision of information materials and analyses by requests.

### Information and analytical activity

In 2017, the regional information system, analytical tools, databases and the website, with the Aral Sea Basin model, ASBmm, were further developed. These analytical software products are unique tools at the regional scale for practical assessment of regional water management situation based on data on available water resources, their distribution by river reaches, provinces and water systems, operation regimes of reservoirs and hydropower stations; losses, deficits, imbalances; environmental water releases; water quality, etc.

As part of the PEER Project "Transboundary water management adaptation in the Amu Darya Basin to climate change uncertainties", a database of planning zones and a planning zone model were developed and helped to enhance substantially the ASBmm model.

Based on long-term cooperation with German universities and other international partners, a big push was made in application of remote sensing (RS) in practices. In 2017, a beta version of RS-based monitoring tool, WUEMoCA, was launched. This tool allows comparing long-term data showing dynamics of available water supply, crops, and productivity.

Water Use Efficiency Monitoring of Central Asia (WUEMoCA) is a system, which is based on logical, fully automated chain of information processing, which was developed by the Wurzburg University, "green spin" company

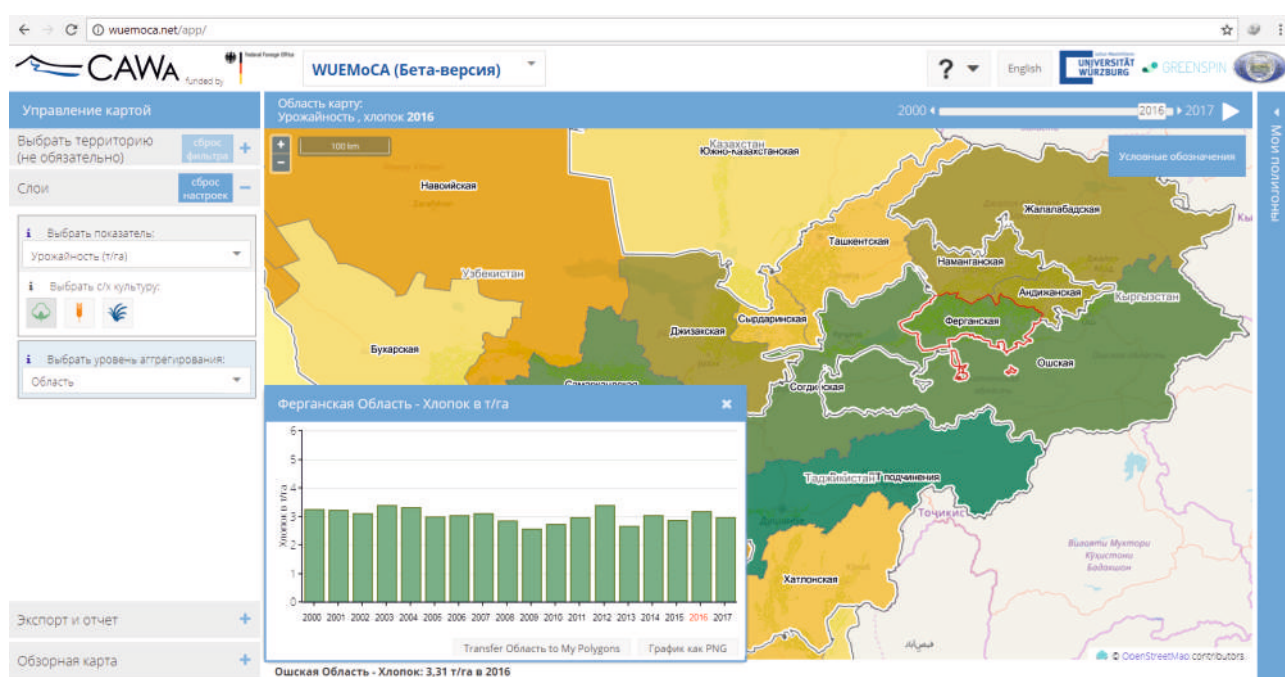
(Germany) and SIC ICWC for visualization of irrigated land use, water use efficiency and crop yields (namely, cotton and wheat) through an interactive web-mapping application (WebGIS). Automatic classification and processing of MODIS images provide the data. The data on land use and yield are derived annually on all years since 2000.

### Information and publications

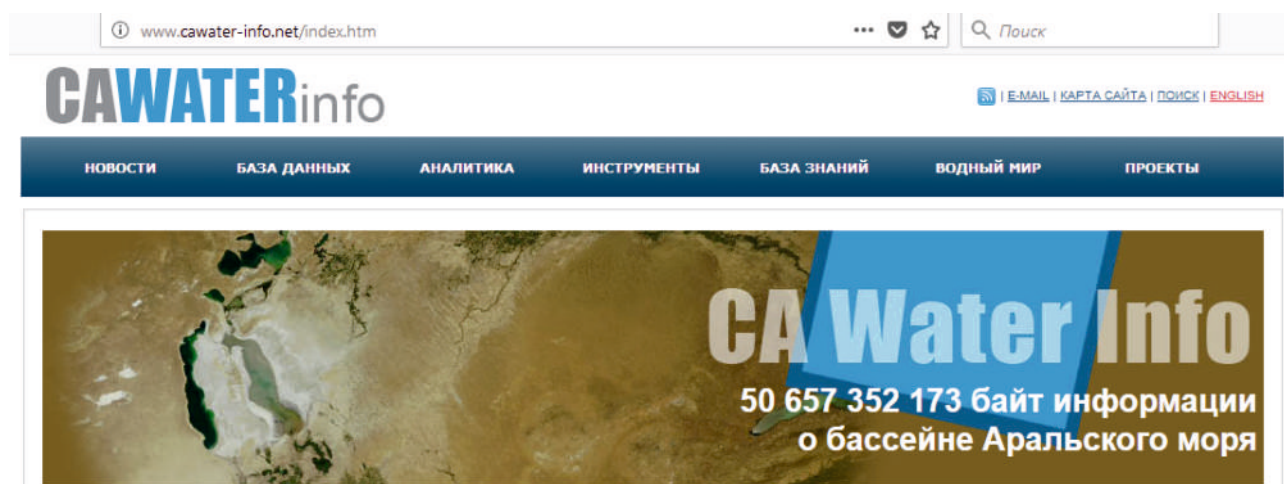
In 2017, regional web-resources such as the knowledge portal on water and ecology of CA (CAWater-Info), the websites of ICWC, SIC ICWC, and the Network of water management organizations in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA) were further developed. A special website was created for the [ICWC Anniversary conference](#). More than 20 publications on water management and law were issued and disseminated in electronic format (See [Publications in 2017](#)).

More than 1200 information items, such as monographs, articles, manuals and other publications were uploaded to the knowledge base "Water in Central Asia" ([www.cawater-info.net/bk/](http://www.cawater-info.net/bk/)).

The Atlas of water-management and environmental organizations in the EECCA countries was updated (<http://atlas.cawater-info.net/base/index>).



<http://wuemoca.net>



<http://www.cawater-info.net/>

### Research and expertise

In 2017, the following projects and work were completed:



Project "Assessing Land Value Changes and Developing a Discussion-Support-Tool for Improved Land Use Planning in the Irrigated Lowlands of Central Asia" ([LaVaCCA](#)), which resulted in the assessment of land productivity and degradation in the lower reaches of the Aral Sea Basin.



The research project "Transboundary water management adaptation in the Amu Darya Basin to climate change uncertainties" ([PEER Program](#)), the results of which included a set of scenarios and options of transboundary water management in the Amu Darya Basin in the context of climate and other changes and in connection with the national plans of irrigated agriculture and hydropower development along transboundary rivers for the long-term (in form of assessments and recommendations for different stakeholders). For the first time, a detailed analysis of future water availability in the Amu Darya Basin was made and directions for future actions were outlined to avoid water crisis.



Assessment of needs and opportunities of the regional CA institutions for mutual learning, knowledge and experience exchange; generation of interactive maps on [best practices](#) on the use of water, land and energy resources and the nature in the countries of CA and [on capacity building](#) in the water sector (as part of the EU-funded CAREC Project "Promoting dialogue for

conflict prevention related to water nexus in Central Asia" (CAWECOOP) (See "[Water Education](#)").

Assessment of work under the UNDP Project in Uzbekistan "Capacity and needs assessment of institutions responsible for training provision", [Technical Capacity Building component](#) of the EU Program on "Sustainable Management of Water Resources in Rural Areas in Uzbekistan. Capacities and needs were assessed of the Professional development center at the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers (TIAME), 12 professional colleges, 8 higher educational institutions, 5 Basin Irrigation System Administrations (BISA), 6 Irrigation System Administrations, water consumer associations in 6 pilot provinces in Uzbekistan. Finally, a package of recommendations was prepared on how to enhance capacities of the institutions assessed and draft Provisions on professional development and re-training in the water sector were developed.

### Capacity building

In 2017, SIC's experts were invited as lecturers to various training events. Additionally, SIC ICWC also conducted a number of training workshops, including:

Training for water consumer associations staff in administrative and legal basics, financial and organisational matters: 31 March - 1 April, Tashkent; August-September, Khorezm, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, Fergana, Samarkand, and Syr Darya provinces in Uzbekistan (UNDP Project in Uzbekistan);

Training for the staff of BWO Amu Darya and its territorial divisions, the teachers, post-

graduates, and master's students of higher educational institutions in approaches to effective water management in the context of climate change, 4-5 May, Urgench, Training Center of BWO Amu Darya (PEER Project);

Training in geographical information systems and remote sensing, 8-11 November, GIS-Center of the Urgench State University (LaVaCCA Project).

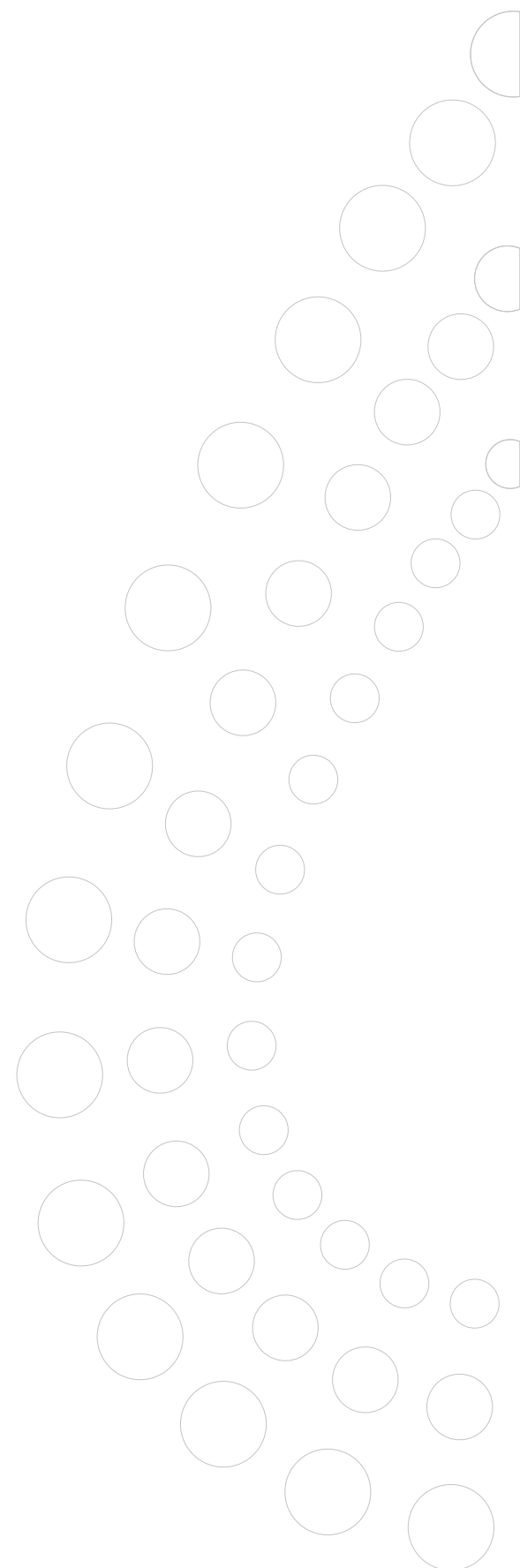
### **International cooperation**

SIC keeps maintaining cooperation with embassies, international financing institutions and organizations (WB, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNDP, OSCE, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)) and takes part in activities of UNECE, World Water Council (WWC), ICID, GWP, INBO and International Water Resources Association (IWRA).

SIC took an active part in the work of ICWC working groups, preparation of discussion notes, reports, presentations, translation and organization of international events and publication of materials.

SIC continues disseminating the Russian versions of materials of WWC and INBO in the EECCA countries.

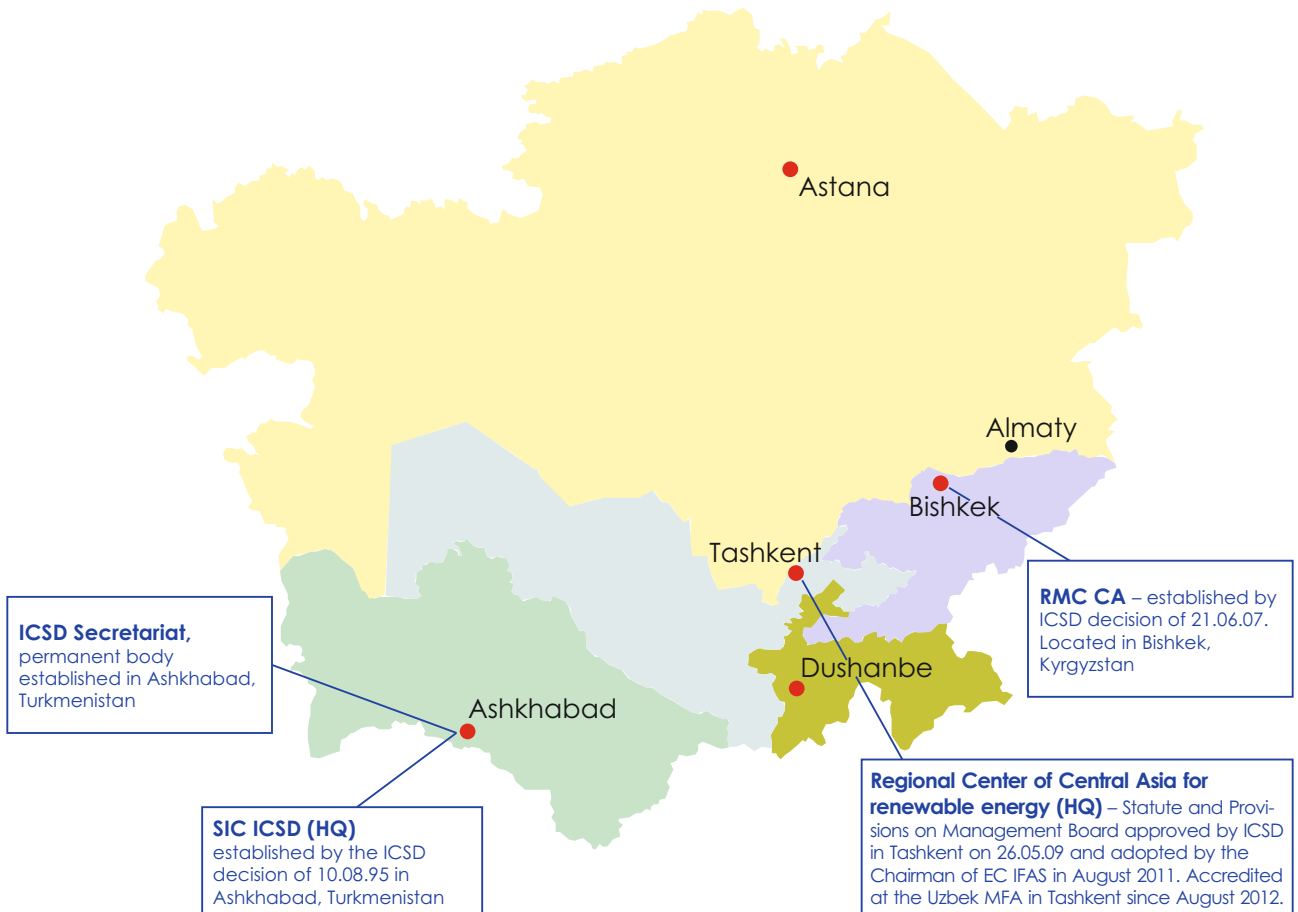
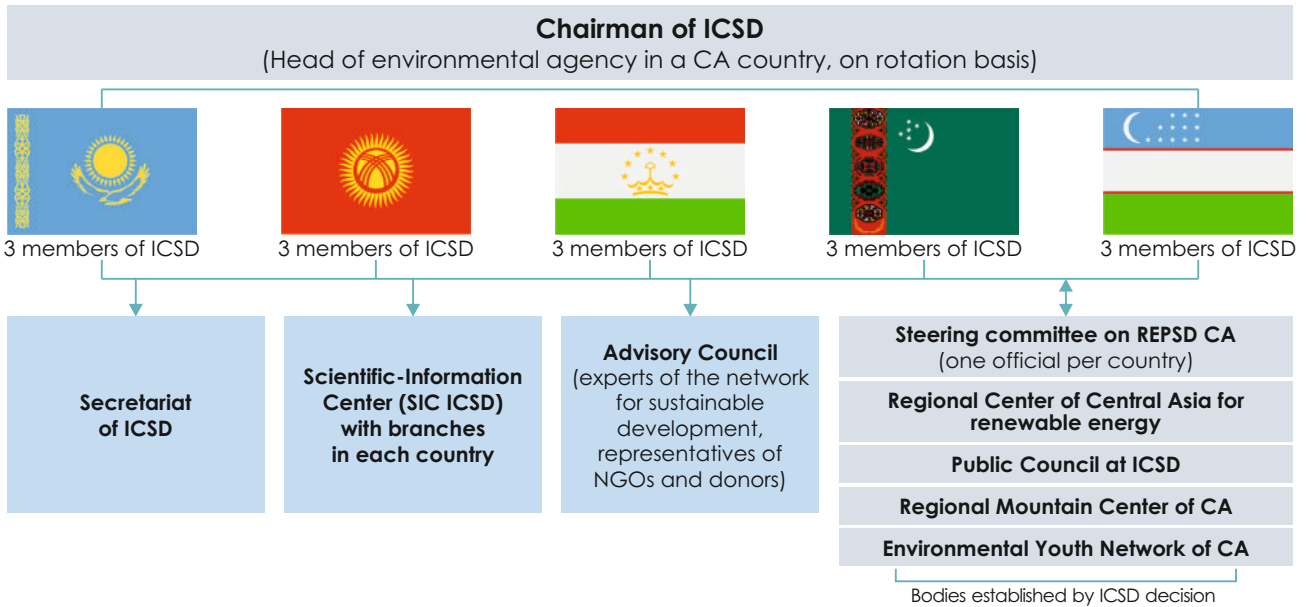
The Center also keeps playing a coordinating role in the activity of ICID working group for the countries under socio-economic transformation.



### 3.3. ICSD of Central Asia

The **Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD)** was established by the decision of the Interstate Council for the Aral Sea Basin in 1993. It is entrusted with the mission of coordination and management of regional

cooperation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development of the Central Asian states. The organizational setup of ICSD and location of its executive bodies are shown in the figures below.



### 3.3.1. ICSD meetings and activities of executive bodies in 2017

In 2017, one [regular meeting](#) of ICSD was held (6-8 June, Ashkhabad) and gathered national delegations of the CA countries and representatives of international organizations, such as United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), EC, UNECE, CAREC, and Regional Mountain Center of Central Asia.

**The Agenda** covered a wide range of matters related to implementation of national environmental conservation strategies and international ecological programs and projects aimed at creation of favorable conditions for population in Prearalie, the efficient use of water and other natural resources, adaptation to climate change, etc. Particularly, the ICSD workplan for 2017 was adopted and a decision was made to pass presidency of the Commission from Turkmenistan, which coordinated regional cooperation in 2015-2016, to the Kyrgyz Republic. Reports were delivered on work plans for the next two years by the Scientific-Information Center (SIC) of ICSD and the Public Council at ICSD, RMC CA and the Regional Center of Central Asia for renewable energy (RCCA RE). It was informed that the review on adaptation of mountain systems in Central Asia to climate change was under preparation.

The meeting made a decision on the development of a **Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia** (REPSD CA) to update the Regional Action Plan on environmental protection for the five states in CA. The drafting process of REPSD CA was considered at a [meeting](#) of the regional working group that brought together representatives of IFAS bodies, state agencies and international organizations on 20-21 November in Almaty. Based on the results of discussion, a Road Map was drafted up to 2030. The Road Map sets that REPSD CA is to be developed in line with national priorities and interests of each of the five countries. In this context, ICSD together with GIZ develops a draft of Framework guidelines on promotion of country processes on the development of REPSD CA.

This draft is to be presented for discussion at one session of the Central Asian Conference on climate change on 24-25 January 2018 in Almaty. Then, through five national consultations on country positions, a draft regional program is to be prepared for further approval by the countries and presentation at the next ICSD meeting.

In 2017, the **Regional Mountain Center of CA**, one of ICSD bodies, in cooperation with the Central Asian experts and with the support of UNEP and GRID-Arendal finalized a regional review "Adaptation of mountain systems in Central Asia to climate change".

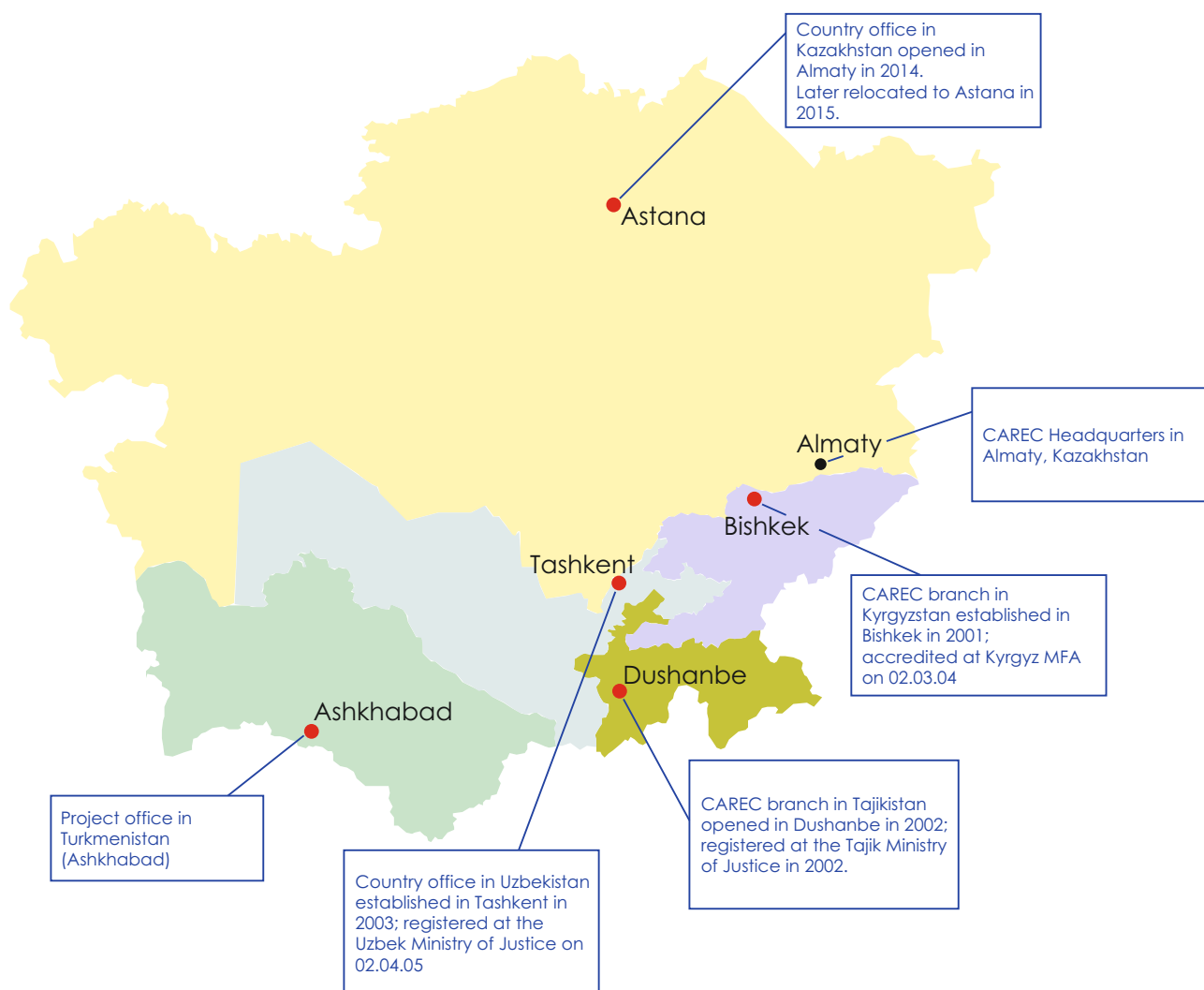
The Review was presented at the regular meeting of ICSD as part of the first Ecological Forum of CA (June, Ashkhabad), the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of Working group EU-CA on environment and climate change (July, Astana) and during other regional meetings in CA. Negotiations were held with donors on regional projects on adaptation of mountain ecosystems in CA to climate change to implement conclusions and recommendations of the Review in practice.

Source: Secretariat and SIC ICSD; [www.mkurca.org](http://www.mkurca.org)

### 3.4. Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC)

**CAREC** is an independent, non-profit, non-political international organization, which assists Central Asian governments, regional and international stakeholders and partners in

addressing their environmental and sustainable development issues in CA. The headquarters is located in Almaty, with the country offices operational in 5 CA states.



Most **important activities undertaken by CAREC** in 2017 include:

[Central Asian International Environmental Forum](#) on the theme “Climate change and water cooperation in the context of sustainable development in Central Asia” (5-7 June, Ashkhabad), during which first dialogue on the project “Environment for Central Asia” was launched;

Organization of participation of the CA delegation in the World Water Week in Stockholm;

Memorandums of cooperation with the Kazakh Ministry of Energy and EC IFAS and the Framework agreement with the Uzbek State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection;

Opening of country office in Kazakhstan;

Appointment of the CAREC Executive Director Dr. I. Abdullayev as a Special Adviser to the China Council for international cooperation on environment and development for the period 2017-2021.



**Program and research activities of CAREC in 2017** were carried out within the following programs:

[Water Initiatives Support Programme \(WIS\)](#), which focused its activities on the following topics: Transboundary cooperation and promotion of the IWRM principles; Water diplomacy and platform for cooperation; Promotion of innovative approaches and practices; Capacity building and scientific exchange.

[Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Programme \(CCSE\)](#) continued to work on the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin ([CAMP4ASB](#)) Project and [PRISE](#) ("Pathways to Resilience in Semi-Arid Economies") research initiatives in Tajikistan.

[Education for Sustainable Development Programme \(ESD\)](#). The 8th Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for

Sustainable Development (CALP) was held; also the programme worked on UNESCO regional project: "Sustainability Begins with Teachers in CA", "Innovation Academy of Samsung in the Republic of Uzbekistan".

[Environment and Health Programme \(E&H\)](#). Partnership was established with the European process "Environment and Health", supported by WHO, UNECE and UN. At the regional level, an updated concept of the E&H programme has been finalized and disseminated among a broad range of stakeholders. At the national level, the training course "Medical Ecology" was developed (Uzbekistan).

[The Environmental Management Programme \(EMP\)](#). A [Project](#) "Central Asian Dialogue on Using Opportunities of Multi-Sectoral Funding through Enhancing Interaction "Water-Energy-Food".

Source: [CAREC Annual report 2017](#)

## 3.5. The platform of interaction between regional organizations

In 2015, EC IFAS and CAREC initiated a platform for interaction of Central Asian regional organizations working on sustainable development and water management issues. The main goals of the platform are better coordination of activities of the regional organizations, exchange of information and

lessons, joint development and implementation of regional projects, and building capacities. In 2017, three meetings of regional organizations were held, and the opportunities and needs of the CA regional organizations for capacity building assessed.

### 3.5.1. Meetings of regional organizations in 2017

At its fourth meeting on 16-17 March in Almaty, regional organisations supported the launch of the process "Environment for Central Asia" and their involvement in organization of the Central Asian Environmental Forum on 5-7 June in Ashkhabad. Concrete actions were outlined for promotion of jubilee events on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> ICWC Anniversary and changing the current format of meetings of the regional organizations.

At the fifth meeting on 4-5 September in Tashkent organized by SIC ICWC the participants discussed how to strengthen regional organizations and their work with key stakeholders and the public to promote integrated water resources management and

sustainable development and how to build capacities of regional organizations. They emphasized a need for a meeting of regional organizations to be organized by the newly established EC IFAS in Ashkhabad.

The sixth meeting was held by EC IFAS on 13-14 November in Ashkhabad with the aim to coordinate joint efforts in implementing proposals stated in the Concept of Turkmenistan's chairmanship in IFAS and other matters of sustainable development of mutual interest. Particularly, revision of the Regional Action Plan on environmental protection (RAPEP) was addressed and the Program of Actions to provide assistance to the Aral Sea Basin countries for 2011-2015 (ASBP-3) and elabora-

tion of ASBP-4, and opportunities for interaction and cooperation with international organizations in implementation of the Concept, regional processes and programs were discussed.

### 3.5.2. Assessment of opportunities and needs of the CA regional organizations for capacity building activities

In 2017, the opportunities and capacities of regional organizations for mutual learning, information, experience, and knowledge exchange, and cooperation under regional and international processes and projects have been assessed.

This assessment showed that most regional organizations in CA had highly qualified staff with substantial experience and expert knowledge on different topics of sustainable development and water management, scientific and methodological basis, as well as conditions for training workshops and experience in training activities.

Since financial possibilities of regional organizations are limited, the mutual learning approach could be one of the forms of capacity building, stronger ties and cooperation.

As a result of the assessment, the topics of potential training workshops were determined, organizations that need training and that have capacities (i.e. methodological and scientific bases and lecturers) for organization of training were identified, and the knowledge base on thematic directions for future joint regional projects was created.

A matrix of opportunities for mutual learning, knowledge and experience exchange between regional organizations in various topics and fields of their activity was developed. As a next step in this direction, it is necessary to elaborate a program on capacity building of regional organizations.

The assessment was conducted by SIC ICWC as part of the EU-funded CAREC Project "Promoting dialogue for conflict prevention related to water nexus in Central Asia" (CAWECOOP).

The survey covered the following organizations: RCH, EC IFAS, Secretariat of ICSD, EC IFAS, RMC CA, RCCA RE, Secretariat of ICWC, SIC ICWC, BWO Syr Darya, BWO Amu Darya, and CAREC.