



Section 4

Bilateral Water Cooperation Between the Countries of Central Asia

4.1. Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan

High-level meetings

On the 29th of May, the President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. S. Zheenbekov paid a **working visit** to Kazakhstan to participate in the session of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community. Within the framework of this visit, the Head of the Kyrgyz Republic met with the President of Kazakhstan Mr. K.-J. Tokayev and the first President of Kazakhstan Mr. N. Nazarbayev.

On the 13th of June, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. K.-J. Tokayev paid a **working visit** to Kyrgyzstan to participate in the SCO Summit. As part of this event, the President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. S. Zheenbekov met with Mr. K.-J. Tokayev, who arrived in Bishkek the next day after his inauguration.

At the invitation of the President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. S. Zheenbekov, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. K.-J. Tokayev paid the **first state visit** to Kyrgyzstan on the 27th of November. The Presidents held a bilateral meeting in a narrow format and then chaired the fifth meeting of the Supreme Interstate Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Source: <https://mfa.gov.kg/en/dm/Embassy-of-the-Kyrgyz-Republic-to-the-Republic-of-Kazakhstan/Menu---Foreign/--uslugi/Political-collaboration/political-collaboration>

Cooperation within the Chu-Talas Water Commission

Bilateral water relations between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are regulated by the Agreement on the Use of Water Management Facilities of Intergovernmental Status on the Chu and Talas Rivers (January 21, 2000). The Chu-Talas Water Commission (CTWC) is a joint body, which is to ensure the joint operation of the water facilities of interstate use and estimate operational costs required for their safe and reliable operation.

Meetings. CTWC held 26 meetings in 2006-2019. In 2019, two meetings were held: 25th meeting on

March 14 in Taraz and 26th meeting on December 19 in Bishkek. The agenda of the meetings included the following: interstate water allocation; repair operations at the interstate facilities; report of the Working Group on Environmental Protection; progress on international projects.

Working Groups. In 2019, as part of the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Protection, water samples were taken from the Chu, Talas, Asa, Kechi Kemin and Kuragaty Rivers at preliminary agreed 16 points on 17 hydrochemical indicators. Discussion of the results is planned at the next meeting of the Working Group in April-May 2020.

Projects. Within the framework of the "[Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Chu and Talas River Basins](#)" project (GEF/UNDP/ UNECE), stakeholders from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan approved the Strategic Action Program, which was developed and approved by the Commission. Implementation of the UNECE project "Enhancing Climate Resilience and Adaptive Capacity in the Transboundary Chu-Talas Basins" funded by the Government of Finland and the SDC project "Water Accountability in the Transboundary Chu-Talas River Basins" in part of the SCADA systems is continued. The work is under way to establish Small Basin Councils in the Chu-Talas basin under the CAREC projects.

Source: Head of the Kazakh Party of the CTWC Secretariat

Other water-related arrangements

In 2019, the electricity exchange between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan reached 270 million kWh. This exchange took place in the framework of the 8th Kyrgyz-Kazakh Intergovernmental Council to provide agricultural consumers of Kazakhstan with irrigation water.

Source: <https://24.kg/english/124047-Electric-Station-company-admits-exchange-of-electricity-with-Kazakhstan/>

4.2. Kazakhstan – Turkmenistan

High-level meetings

On October 11, the President of Kazakhstan Mr. K.-J. Tokayev and the President of Turkmenistan Mr. G. Berdimukhamedov met in Ashgabat on the margins of the Session of the Council of the

CIS Heads of State. The Heads of State discussed a wide range of issues on the bilateral agenda, the regional situation, as well as cooperation under various international formats.

Source: www.akorda.kz

4.3. Kazakhstan – Tajikistan

High-level meetings

On June 14, the President of Tajikistan Mr. E. Rahmon received the President of Kazakhstan Mr. K.-J. Tokayev, who arrived in Dushanbe to participate in the fifth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

The Parties discussed the development and expansion of cooperation in trade and econo-

my, water and energy, transport and communications and other mutually beneficial spheres.

The President of Tajikistan Mr. E. Rahmon received the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Mr. A. Mamin, who arrived in Tajikistan with an official visit. Among others, the issues related to the development and expansion of water, fuel and energy cooperation were discussed.

Source: www.president.tj

4.4. Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan

High-Level Meetings

On April 14-15, the President of Kazakhstan Mr. K.-J. Tokayev paid a **state visit** to Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the Parties discussed prospects for strengthening of bilateral friendship and good neighborhood, cooperation in trade, transport, industry, tourism, and other spheres and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Source: www.akorda.kz

Meetings of the Working Group on Water Management

In November 2016, a joint Kazakh-Uzbek Working Group was set up to develop proposals for enhanced bilateral water cooperation. The Uzbek side of the Working Group is led by Mr. Sh. Khamraev, Minister of Water Management of Uzbekistan, while the Kazakh side was first led by Mr. Ye. Nyssanbayev, Vice Minister of Agriculture, and now is headed by Mr. S.N. Gromov, Vice-Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources. The Working Group meets to discuss the challenging issues related to water use in the mid-

dle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya River and in other transboundary basins in the territories of the both countries and find the ways for further improvement of bilateral cooperation.

As of 1 January 2020, 7 meetings of the Working Group were held. At the 6th meeting, the Parties discussed fulfillment of the decisions made at the previous meetings, considered water discharge from the Shardara reservoir into the Aydar-Amasai lake system, and discussed a draft bilateral agreement on joint management, use and protection of transboundary water resources (February 26, Tashkent).

The 7th meeting of the Working Group was held in Almaty on November 5, 2019, with the participation of the Minister of Water Management of Uzbekistan Mr. Sh.R. Khamraev and the Vice-Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan Mr. S.N. Gromov. It discussed implementation of the decision of the 6th meeting and a draft bilateral agreement on joint management, use and protection of transboundary water resources.

Source: Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan

4.5. Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan

High-Level Meetings

On July 26-27, for the first time in the history of Kyrgyz-Tajik relations, the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan **met** on the Kyrgyz-Tajik state border with local residents and elders of border villages of the two countries. Also, working visits of the Kyrgyz President Mr. S. Zheenbekov to Tajikistan (26.07.2019, Isfara) and the Tajik President Mr. E. Rahmon to Kyrgyzstan (27.07.2019, Cholpon-Ata) took place.

The leaders of two countries had negotiations in narrow and extended formats.

On October 11, the Kyrgyz President Mr. S. Zheenbekov **met** with the President of Tajikistan Mr. E. Rahmon within the framework of the regular meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State in Ashgabat. The water and energy cooperation matters were addressed between the two countries at the meeting. The Parties stressed the im-

portance of accelerated delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Tajik state border. It was noted that for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan the development of hydropower is of great importance, but with account of the interests of other states in the region. The confidence was expressed that hydropower projects in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will give a positive impetus to achieving SDGs by 2030 and addressing socio-economic challenges in the countries of Central Asia and beyond.

On November 27, the President of Tajikistan Mr. E. Rahmon and the President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. S. Zheenbekov met face-to-face on the sidelines of the session of the CSTO Collective Security Council in Bishkek. As a result of the meeting, an agreement was reached to intensify the negotiation process between the Government delegations of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Tajik state border.

Source: <https://mfa.gov.kg>, www.president.tj/

4.6. Kyrgyzstan – Turkmenistan

High-level meetings

On October 11, the President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. S. Zheenbekov and the President of Turkmenistan Mr. G. Berdymukhamedov met in Ashgabat on the margins of the Session of the Council of the

CIS Heads of State. The topical issues and priority areas of bilateral cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan were addressed.

Source: <http://president.kg>

4.7. Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan

High-Level Meetings

On November 29, a meeting between the President of Uzbekistan Mr. Sh. Mirziyoyev and the President of Kazakhstan S. Zheenbekov was held within the framework of the second Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia. This format of meetings has already proved to be an effective platform for discussing pressing regional issues. Following the meeting, the Parties agreed to hold the third Consultative Meeting in Kyrgyzstan in 2020.

President of Uzbekistan is the “Person of 2019” in Kyrgyzstan. On February 17, 2020, a solemn event was held in the conference hall of the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Kyrgyzstan on the occasion of awarding the title “Person of 2019” to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev by Ala-Too Aiymdary (Ala-Too Women) Ecological Movement. On behalf of the country’s leadership, the First Deputy Minister of

Foreign Affairs Ilkhom Ne’matov arrived in Bishkek to receive the special award and diploma.

Source: <https://uza.uz/>, <https://mfa.uz/en/>

Meetings of the Working Group on Water Management

The Group worked within the framework of the Interagency Agreement on the establishment of a joint bilateral water commission to find constructive solutions for water and energy issues. On August 27, 2019, a meeting was held in Namanagan to approve the Regulations on the Permanent Commission for the Intergovernmental Use of the Orto-Tokay (Kasansay) reservoir and its composition, including the first meeting of the Commission.

Source: Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan

4.8. Tajikistan – Turkmenistan

High-level meetings

On October 11, the President of Tajikistan Mr. E. Rahmon and the President of Turkmenistan Mr. G. Berdymukhamedov met in Ashgabat on the

margins of the Session of the Council of the CIS Heads of State. Cooperation in the transport and communication sector was a separate topic of discussion.

Source: <http://avesta.tj>

4.9. Tajikistan – Uzbekistan

High-level meetings

On April 25, on the sidelines of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the President E. Rahmon **held talks** with the President Sh. Mirziyoyev. The Heads of State expressed their satisfaction with the current state of cooperation. The Parties called important political events of 2018 historical as a result of mutual efforts, which have laid a solid foundation for effective cooperation in all spheres. The importance of implementation of reached agreements and of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was also highlighted.

On June 14, on the sidelines of the Summit of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Presidents of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan **held a meeting**. They discussed the development of trade and economic relations, the establishment of joint production enterprises, an increase in volume of trade turnover, as well as other spheres of mutually beneficial cooperation.

On October 11, on the sidelines of the Council of CIS Heads of State in Ashgabat, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. E. Rahmon **held a meeting** with the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Sh. Mirziyoyev. The discussion focused on the development of strategic partnership and prospects for mutually beneficial cooperation of the countries.

Source: www.president.tj

Meetings of the Working Group on integrated transboundary water use in Central Asia

As part of the state visit of the President of Uzbekistan Mr. Sh. Mirziyoyev to the Republic of Tajikistan, an Uzbek-Tajik Working Group on integrated transboundary water use in Central Asia was established (March 9-10, 2018).

As of 1 January 2020, two meetings of the Working Group were held – on June 6, 2018 in Tashkent and on November 28, 2018 in Dushanbe. No meetings took place in 2019.

Other water-related arrangements

In 2018, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan resumed energy supplies between the countries. In 2019, 1.4 bil-

lion kWh of electricity was exported from Tajikistan to Uzbekistan at a price of 2 cents/kWh. The total electricity export from Tajikistan to Uzbekistan amounted to US \$28.5 million.

Cooperation on the Zeravshan River

The Zeravshan (Zarafshan) River is a former tributary of the Amu Darya River. It rises in the Zeravshan glacier (2,800-5,500 m), flows in latitudinal direction from east to west between the Turkistan ridge (4,500 m) in the north and Zeravshan ridge (5,500 m) in the south; in the west, it enters a vast plain and is used for irrigation there.

The run-off formation area of the river is almost entirely located within the territory of Tajikistan, and the river's lower reaches are in Uzbekistan. The river is of great importance for the both countries. Tajikistan is interested in developing hydropower resources in the Zeravshan basin, the potential of which is more than 20 billion kWh (Master Plan for Integrated Use of the Zeravshan River). The river water is used for irrigation of 554,930 ha of fertile irrigated land in Samarkand, Bukhara, and Navoi provinces and partially in Kashkadarya and Djizak provinces. It is also the source of life for 6,040.5 thousand people in these regions. The Zeravshan River also used to feed the land of Bukhara province earlier. To increase water supply, Uzbekistan had to transfer water through the Amu-Bukhara Canal and practically cut off Bukhara from the Zeravshan.

In August 2018, within the framework of the state visit of the President of Tajikistan to Uzbekistan, the Parties have [agreed](#) to consider joint construction of two hydropower plants, with the total capacity of 320 megawatt in the Tajik area of the Zeravshan River. **In 2019 and early 2020**, the authorized agencies of the Parties worked on the matter:

- On January 28, 2019, the Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. D. Shoimzoda announced at a [press conference](#) the establishment of a joint Working Group, which would delineate the construction site and set methods HPPs will be built. After technical discussions, financial matters would be addressed, and then the design work would start;

- On April 3, 2019, the Termez city hosted a [meeting](#) of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation of Uzbekis-

tan and Tajikistan under the chairmanship of Prime Ministers. The Commission has decided to activate joint hydropower projects:

- On January 28, negotiations were held in Tashkent between the Working Groups of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to discuss the joint construction of HPPs on the Zeravshan River. The Tajik delegation was led by Mr. J.Sh. Shoimzoda, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, while the Uzbek delegation – by Mr. J. Mirzamakhmudov, First Deputy Minister of Energy of Uzbekistan. The focus of discussion was on a draft agreement between the Governments of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on the procedure and terms for sharing of construction and operation of hydropower plants on the Zeravshan River. After reaching a general agreement, more details will be spelled out in the agreement on the purchase of electricity and the development of a feasibility study for the project.

According to the [Uzbek Ministry of Energy](#), the construction of hydroelectric power plants is planned to be carried out in stages: first, the construction of the Yavan HPP with an estimated cost of US \$282 million, capacity 140 MW and generation of 700-800 million kWh of electricity. At the next stage, the Parties will consider the possibility of building a HPP on the Fan Darya River with an estimated cost of US \$270 million, capacity 135 MW and generation of 500-600 million kWh. The constructed HPPs will generate up to 1,400 million kWh of ecologically clean electricity exclusively for the needs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The project will help maintain the peak capacity of the unified energy system, create new jobs and contribute to transfer of electricity to other regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on a parity basis.

This project of joint water development of the transboundary Zeravshan River is of political, economic and social significance. While establishing organizational and legal framework for cooperation, it is important to take into account modern and prospective hydrological and climatic conditions in the basin.

The design flow of the Zeravshan River is 5.14 km³ (Dupuli GS¹⁰, 1950-2010). In 2000-2008, the average annual flow decreased by 0.14 km³ and amounted to 5 km³ in the multi-year period. In 1979-1996, the average annual discharge de-

creased to 120-117 m³/s. In 2005-2020, water discharge was well higher than the norm – 200-250 m³/s. The data on the Ravatkhodja GS in Uzbekistan is slightly different: it shows the average flow of the Zeravshan River at 4.6 km³ for 2005-2009. According to WUEMoCA-based estimations, precipitation in the river's run-off formation zone was the lowest in 2005-2009. Within the Dupuli GS/Ravatkhodja GS reach, there is minor water intake on the left bank to the Urgut district ($Q_{max} = 3 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$). There is also the Magiandarya tributary.

The Zeravshan River and its tributaries have glacial-snow feeding. There are 1,272 glaciers in the basin, with the total area of 708.5 km² and the volume of 36.8 km³.¹¹ It is estimated¹² that the volume of glaciers in the basin would decrease significantly in the next 50 years. The Zeravshan glacier will degrade on an area of 25-30 km², and this will lead to its 30-35% shrinkage and, consequently, to a twofold decrease in glacier runoff. Currently, the glacier runoff of the Zeravshan River is estimated at 1.3 km³ (25% of the total run-off), whereas, by 2050, it is expected to decrease to 0.629 km³, and the total run-off will decrease by more than 10-12%. Therefore, the Zeravshan River and its tributaries can switch from glacial-snow to snow-glacial feeding.

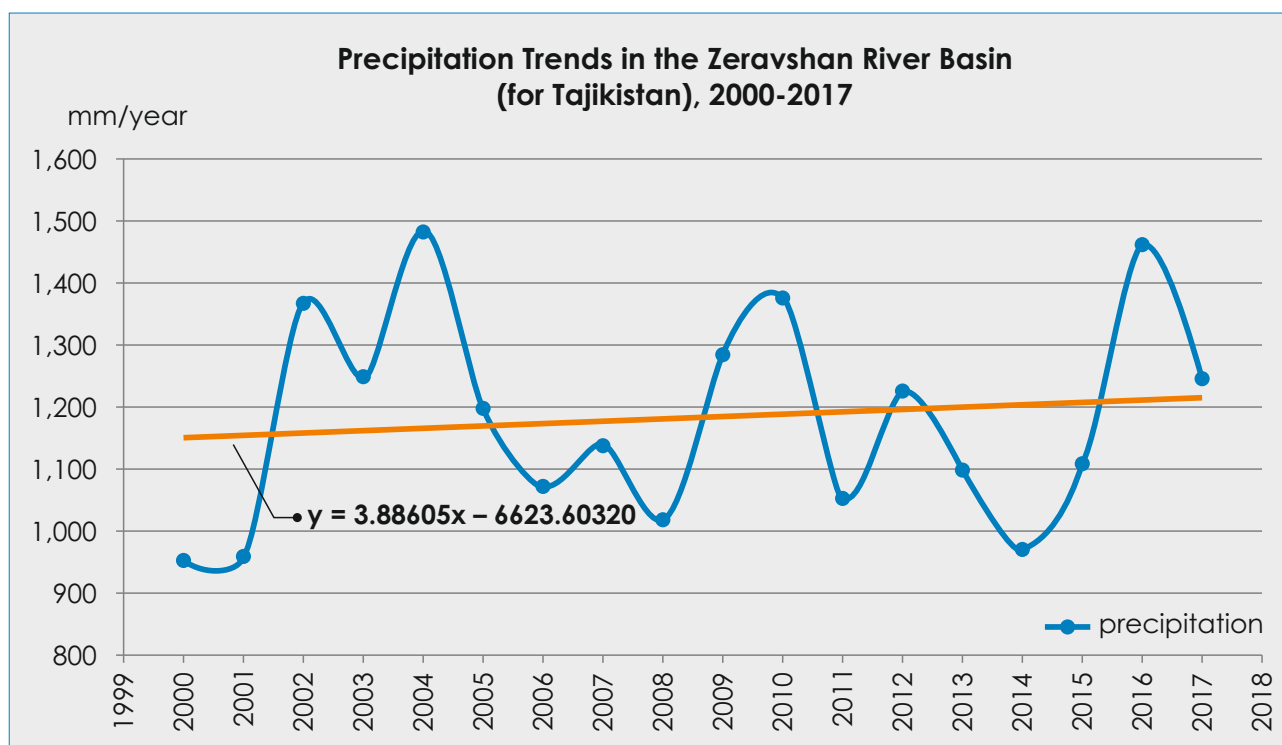
RS-based measurements by SIC ICWC show that over the last 20 years precipitation over the catchment area of the Zeravshan River in Tajikistan has increased (this can be seen in the graph below). At the same time, high fluctuations of precipitation and 170-200 mm decrease in the dry years 2000, 2008, and 2014 are observed. This fact requires greater control over water availability in the river from the side of the both countries.

To ensure sustainable water management in the Zeravshan River basin in the context of climate change, it is important to organize regular measurements and exchange data on daily river discharge between the hydrometeorological services of the countries. An agreement on joint development of hydropower resources of the Zeravshan River should also provide for mutual obligations of the parties to guarantee water releases through the Dupuli GS and Pervomayskaya dam that would not cause an increase in water shortage in summer against the natural river flow.

¹⁰ Gauging station

¹¹ Catalogue of glaciers of USSR. Book 14, Issue 3, volumes 1, 2. Zeravshan River Basin – L.: Hydrometeoizdat, 1982

¹² Abrorov Kh., Akhmadov A.Sh. What changes await the glaciers of mountain Zeravshan. http://www.cawaterinfo.net/zeravshan/pdf/abrorov-ahmadov_ru.pdf



Source: SIC ICWC, 2020

4.10. Turkmenistan – Uzbekistan

On November 28, the President of Turkmenistan Mr. G. Berdymukhamedov arrived to Uzbekistan with a working visit to discuss prospects for the Turkmen-Uzbek cooperation and participate in the second Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia. During the talks, a wide range of issues concerning current state and prospects for the Turkmen-Uzbek partnership was discussed.

Source: <https://mfa.uz/en/press/news/2019/11/22147/?print=Y>

On August 16, the Turkmen-Uzbek political consultations took place. The delegations headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Mr. R. Meredov and Minister of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. A. Kamilov addressed the issues of bilateral cooperation in political, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian spheres. During the talks, the Parties stated the need for widening water and land cooperation. Following the consultations, the Parties signed the Program of cooperation for 2020-2021 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Source: <https://www.mfa.gov.tm/en/news/1561>

Working Groups and Commissions

On November 23, the 15th session of the Joint Turkmen-Uzbek Commission on Trade-Economic,

Scientific-Technical and Cultural Cooperation was held in Ashgabat. Among other matters, the Parties discussed in detail the interaction in the field of agriculture, water resources and environmental protection. The next meeting of the Commission is to be held in Tashkent in 2020.

Source: <https://www.mfa.gov.tm/en/news/1755>

In 2019, the parties worked on an agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of Turkmenistan on the joint Turkmen-Uzbek Intergovernmental Commission on Water Issues. A draft agreement has been discussed with relevant ministries and departments of the countries and is ready for signature.

Source: Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Water cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is maintained through the Trilateral Working Group, which also includes BWO Amu Darya. The Parties constructively, in the spirit of mutual trust and respect for each other's interests, address the issues related to water sharing in the Amu Darya basin. By 1 January 2020, the Group held 204 meetings, including 12 meetings of water management organizations responsible for the river's lower reaches on the issues of water allocation in 2019.

Source: BWO Amu Darya

