



SECTION 4

Bilateral Water Cooperation
between the Countries
of Central Asia

4.1. Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan

High-level contacts

The President of Kazakhstan paid an **official visit** to the Kyrgyz Republic on May 26. A joint statement was adopted and 13 agreements and memorandums were signed in the course of the visit. The President of Kazakhstan called for stronger investment cooperation by searching for mutually beneficial proposals and forming a list of promising projects, among which could be the joint construction of hydropower facilities in Kyrgyzstan, in particular, Kambarata-1. In the course of negotiations the presidents also addressed the water diplomacy and enhanced IT cooperation aspects.

The President of the Kyrgyz Republic had **working visits** to Kazakhstan to take part in the VI Summit of member states of the Conference on Interaction and Cooperation in Central Asia (CICA) (October 13, Astana), a meeting of the Council of CIS States and the Summit of Heads of State "Central Asia – Russia" (October 14, Astana), and the first "Central Asia – European Union" Summit (October 27, Astana).

In the course of **telephone conversations** in 2022, the Presidents discussed the prospects for Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan strategic partnership focusing on more active trade and economic cooperation on the international stage.

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, the mission of 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. Over the period from 2006 to 2022, 31 Commission's meetings were held. In 2022, the Commission had two meetings:

30th meeting (April 20, Taraz, Kazakhstan). The agenda included: (1) approval of the schedule of water delivery from the interstate water facilities on the Chu and Talas Rivers for the growing season 2022; (2) scope of work completed in 2021 at the interstate water facilities; (3) approval of the list and quantity of repair and rehabilitation work for 2022; (4) increasing Kazakhstan's shared financing for O&M of the interstate water facilities. The Kyrgyzstani party provided information on difficulties resulting from Kazakhstan's water withdrawals from the Aspara/Ashmara River.

The parties also discussed the following matters: (1) safety of the Kirov dam and, in particular, preparatory work for the replacement of a cone valve of the

dam; (2) amendments and additions to the 2000 Agreement: the CTWC Secretariat submitted for consideration a draft Joint Statement on the "2022-2030 Strategic Action Program for the Chu and Talas River Basins".³⁰

31st meeting (December 7, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan). The parties discussed: (1) outcomes of the growing season 2022; (2) completed repair and rehabilitation of interstate water facilities on the Chu and Talas Rivers. The Kyrgyzstani side of the Secretariat reported on the endorsement of the "Action plan for the Chu and Talas River Basins in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2022-2030." UNECE representatives informed on measures under the Water Convention in 2022-2023 and on national water policy dialogues held in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Working groups and other activities. The Working Group on environment protection (WGEP) took 3 seasonal water samples in the Chu and Talas rivers in 2022. The Group's Kyrgyz team made an assessment of the needs for conservation of globally important wetlands in the Chu River basin (in the Kyrgyzstani territory).

At its 10th meeting in November in Bishkek, WGEP discussed the results of: (1) monitoring of surface water quality of the Chu and Talas rivers in 2022, including seasonal coordinated water samplings, (2) hydrometeorological monitoring at gauging stations and weather stations in the river basins over 2016-2021. The Parties discussed possibilities for the development of an Environmental Atlas for the Chu River basin, including the plant and animal habitats, etc. Finally, the work plan for 2023 was adopted. The WGEP work results and joint decisions were submitted to the 31st CTWC meeting for discussion in December 2022.

Source: CTWC Secretariat

Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan)

The heads of water and energy ministries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan met on March 7 to address the matters of water and energy cooperation. In order to avoid emptying of the Toktogul reservoir down to a critical level and to ensure electricity supplies in the growing season in 2022-2023 within the framework of the Protocol on electricity exchanges between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan of March 2, 2021 and the Protocol on mutual electricity supplies between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan of March 11, 2021, the Parties have agreed that: 1) the Uzbek party would ensure electricity transit from Turkmenistan to Kyrgyzstan in 2022 and supply 500 MWh of electricity to Kyrgyzstan in 2023 as part of electricity exchange, with the following equivalent return in 2024-2025; 2) the Kazakh party will supply 1050 MWh of electricity at \$0.027 to Kyrgyzstan in 2022-2023; 3) the Kyrgyz party will release water from the Uchkurgan HPP under a mutually agreed schedule during the growing season.

³⁰ the 2022-2030 Strategic Action Program for the Chu and Talas River Basins was approved by protocol decision of the 28th CTWC meeting

4.2. Kazakhstan – Tajikistan

High-level contacts

On May 13, the President of Tajikistan has discussed with the speaker of the Kazakhstani Senate the political, trade and economic aspects of cooperation and the inter-parliamentary relations.

The President of Tajikistan had **working visits** to Astana to take part in the summits of CICA (October 13, Astana), CIS and “Central Asia – Russia” (October 14, Astana), and the first “Central Asia – European Union” meeting (October 27, Astana).

In the course of **telephone conversations** in 2022, the Presidents discussed the prospects for strengthening bilateral cooperation in trade, economic, investment and cultural spheres.

Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)

On June 8, the Kazakh, Tajik and Uzbek parties held a working meeting to reach an agreement on the operation regime of the Bakhri Tojik Reservoir for the period from June to August 2022. Upon the request of the Uzbek and Kazakh parties, the Tajik party has agreed to release additional quantities of water from the reservoir.

To mitigate the negative impact of the additional “emptying” on intake structures of the reservoir and maintain embankments, the Uzbek and Kazakh parties have agreed on specific measures for non-reimbursable material or technical support to the Tajik side.

4.3. Kazakhstan – Turkmenistan

High-level contacts

The President of Turkmenistan paid a **state visit** to Kazakhstan on October 15. The Heads of State signed a joint statement, where, among other things, they recognized the importance of coordinated actions in solving environmental problems, confirmed the need to consolidate efforts for socio-economic and environmental improvement in the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea basins in an integrated manner, expressed their readiness to facilitate joint efforts on institutional and legal improvement of the IFAS, taking into account the interests of all the CA countries, and declared that transboundary water was the common asset of the people in the region.

A number of documents on mutual understanding and cooperation have been signed. Those included the Memorandums between the ministries of energy, agriculture and environment of the two republics.

The President of Turkmenistan also had **working visits** to Kazakhstan to take part in a meeting of the Council of CIS States and the Summit of Heads of State “Central Asia – Russia” (October 14, Astana).

The President of Kazakhstan paid a **working visit** to Turkmenistan to take part in the sixth Summit of the Heads of Caspian States, on the sidelines of which he met with the President of Turkmenistan (June 29, Ashgabat).

The Kazakhstani President honored H.E. Berdymukhamedov with the highest award of Kazakhstan – the order of Altyn Qyran.

In the course of **telephone conversations**, the Presidents discussed the prospects for energy coopera-

tion, increasing mutual trade, and strengthening partnership in the industrial sphere (February 14), multidimensional relationships (March 15), trade and economic ties and cultural and humanitarian cooperation (May 17).

Other bilateral arrangements

The Treaty signed in 2021 between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on delimitation of the border and fishing zones in the Caspian Sea came into force on November 28, 2022.



4.4. Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan

High-level contacts

The President of Kazakhstan paid a **state visit** to Uzbekistan on December 21-22. The key topics addressed during the talks included the matters related to extended relations in political, trade and economic, energy, transportation and logistics, agricultural, water and other spheres. The visit resulted in the signing of the Treaty on Allied Relations, the Treaty on the Demarcation of the Uzbek-Kazakh State Border and 15 documents envisioning further expansion of multifaceted cooperation. The Heads of State reaffirmed their readiness to continue cooperation in transboundary water sharing in the spirit of mutual respect and trust and to strengthen joint efforts for mitigating the negative consequences of the Aral Sea tragedy.

The President of Uzbekistan had **working visits** to Kazakhstan to take part in the CICA Summit (October 13, Astana), a meeting of the Council of CIS States and the Summit of Heads of State "Central Asia – Russia" (October 14, Astana), the "Central Asia – European Union" Summit (October 27, Astana). As part of these visits, the presidents of the two countries discussed the matters of bilateral cooperation, including increasing trade, joint investment projects in industry, energy, transport, logistics, agriculture and other sectors.

In the course of **telephone conversations**, the presidents talked on extended cooperation, joint projects, bilateral investment, transport-communication, research and education and cultural collaboration, stability and sustainable development of Karakalpakstan, etc.

Bilateral working group on water

The joint Kazakh-Uzbek working group for facilitating water cooperation did not gather in 2022. The working group had several meetings in the past: December 2016 (Tashkent), February 2017 (Shymkent), April 2017 (Tashkent), November (Astana) and May 2018 (Kyzylorda), February 2019 and November 2019 (Almaty).

Kazakh-Uzbek Joint Working Group (Commission) on Environment Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River Basin

The Kazakh-Uzbek Joint Working Group (Commission) on Environment Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River Basin (hereinafter Working Group) is

formed of experts from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in line with the 2017-2019 Strategy for Economic Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and the 1997 Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the field of environmental protection and management.

Meetings. By 1 January 2023, the Working Group had five meetings: on September 27-28, 2018 in Tashkent; on November 7-8, 2019 in Nur Sultan; on December 24, 2020 in the video-conference format; on December 13, 2021 in Almaty; and, on December 14-15, 2022 in Tashkent.

The fifth meeting was attended by national experts representing environmental, geology, health care, emergency, hydrometeorology, and water sectors from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and international experts and representatives of CAREC. The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Uzbekistan State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection, Mr. Kazbekov and the Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Regulation and Control at the Kazakhstan Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, Mr. Zholdosov.

The Parties discussed progress on the work plan, including quarterly water sampling from the Syr Darya, analysis of samples and data exchange. The Parties informed each other on the results of their activities in 2022 regarding public monitoring of pollution sources that affected water quality and relevant measures taken. The participants discussed also the outcomes of bilateral working meetings on joint analysis of water samples in laboratories and capacity building in public monitoring (exchange of experience) using the pollution sources in the Syr Darya River basin as case studies. A review of water quality along the Syr Darya River in the territory of Uzbekistan for 2018-2022 was also presented. The information on the results of the regional project "Development of joint measures to prevent and respond to pollution of the Syr Darya River in emergency situations" was presented as well. Finally, the work plan for 2023 was adopted. It included the joint plan of pollution countermeasures in the Syr Darya and Keles rivers and follow up on establishment of a **joint quadripartite working group** for Syr Darya water quality analysis.

Source: State Committee of RUz for Ecology and Environment Protection

Trilateral water-related arrangements

See Subsection 4.1. Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan and Subsection 4.2. Kazakhstan-Tajikistan.

4.5. Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan

High-level contacts

The President of Tajikistan paid a **working meeting** to the Kyrgyz Republic to take part in the fourth Consultative meeting of the Heads of CA States (July 21,

Cholpon-Ata), on the sidelines of which the heads of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had a meeting. The parties underlined the importance of coordinated transboundary water use within the border areas. They reached an agreement to resume work of the Inter-

departmental Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan working group on bilateral water use. Also, the Presidents discussed activities of the IFAS in light of Tajikistan's chairmanship of the Fund and supported the continuation of consequent efforts for institutional and legal improvement of the IFAS, while taking into account the interests of all the countries in the region. The parties agreed to step up activities of the existing mechanisms of bilateral cooperation, including the work of the Intergovernmental commission for bilateral cooperation and the Intergovernmental commission on delimitation and demarcation of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border.

The issues of delimitation and demarcation of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border were discussed by the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the sidelines of the SCO summit (September 16, Samarkand) and the CICA meeting (October 13, Astana). The Heads of State agreed to resolve emerging issues exclusively by political and diplomatic means and again step up activities of relevant working groups on border delimitation and demarcation and on topographic and legal matters.

In the course of **telephone conversations**, the presidents addressed the key points of bilateral cooperation (June 30, July 27).

4.6. Kyrgyzstan – Turkmenistan

High-level contacts

The President of Turkmenistan paid a **working visit** to the Kyrgyz Republic to take part in the fourth Consultative meeting of the Heads of CA States, on the sidelines of which he had a meeting with the President of Kyrgyzstan. The parties discussed the prospects for bilateral partnership in the context of implementation of previously reached agreements and their socio-economic priorities (July 21, Cholpon-Ata).

Meetings also took place on the sidelines of: (1) the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Orga-

nization of Turkic States – between the President of Kyrgyzstan and the Chairman of the Turkmenistan Parliament's Upper chamber (November 11, Samarkand), and (2) the Inter-parliament Forum of the Central Asian States and the Russian Federation – between the President of Turkmenistan and the Chairman of the Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Council (May 12, Ashgabat).

In the course of **telephone conversations**, the country leaders agreed to continue delivering on joint plans for further expansion of political and economic ties (March 15).

4.7. Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan

High-level contacts

The President of Uzbekistan paid a **working visit** to Kyrgyzstan to participate in the fourth Consultative meeting of the Heads of CA States (July 20-21).

The President of Kyrgyzstan had **working visits** to Uzbekistan to take part in: (1) the 22nd meeting of the Council of SCO Heads of State (September 14-16, Samarkand), on the sidelines of which the presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan discussed the construction of China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railroad and the Kambarata-1 hydroproject and the water cooperation between the countries; (2) 9th meeting of the summit of the Organization of Turkic States (November 10-11, Samarkand).

During **telephone talks**, the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan discussed the launch of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz development fund, acceleration of infrastructure projects (Kambarata-1 hydroproject and China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railroad), and expansion of industrial cooperation (April 8); implementation of agreements on the state border, increasing trade, deepening industrial cooperation, and promoting joint infrastructure projects in transport and energy spheres (May 19).

Bilateral water-related arrangements

In November, another round of political consultations between the RUz and the Kyrgyz Republic took place in Bishkek (November 3). The following documents were signed as a result of the consultations:

(1) Treaty between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on individual sections of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border^{31,32}: the Treaty defines the total of 302.29 km of the border line (35 sections). Uzbekistan gets 4,957 ha within an area of the Andizhan reservoir and an additional 19.5 ha for maintenance and protection of the dam, while Kyrgyzstan gets 1019 ha of pasture land as compensation. Also, 12,849 ha of the Govasai site are transferred to Kyrgyzstan as compensation for the unbuild Kempirabad Canal on the left bank of the Andizhan reservoir. Additionally, the Kyrgyz side shall not build hydraulic and other structures that obstruct the natural flow of the Govasai River and shall avoid technical pollution of water. It was agreed that joint water management of the Andizhan reservoir and a section of Chashma spring in the Sokh district should be regulated by separate agreements.

(2) Agreement between the Government of Uzbekistan and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic on joint water management of the Andizhan (Kem-

³¹ ratified by the Law ZRU-804 of 30.11.2022

³² ZKR 110 of 28.11.2022

pirabad) reservoir^{33,34}: the Agreement establishes the Joint Commission on joint water management, approves its regulations, and determines the authorized bodies responsible for implementation of the agreement. Measures to be taken by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for safe operation of the reservoir were agreed as well. The Uzbek side undertakes to maintain the water level in the reservoir at a level not higher than 900 meters to ensure free access to and use of water by Kyrgyz citizens (watering animals, irrigation, and fishing) and not to install engineering facilities around the reservoir. In turn, the Kyrgyz party will arrange water protection zones and ensure compliance with the water use regime.

(3) Agreement between the Ministry of Water Management of Uzbekistan and the Water Resources Service at the Ministry of Agriculture of Kyrgyzstan on water cooperation.

Meetings of the Working group on water management

A work meeting was held between the Uzbekistan Ministry of Water Management and the Kyrgyzstan

Water Resources Service in Ala-Buka district of Jalal-Abad province, Kyrgyz Republic (May 18). The parties discussed: (1) draft Regulations on the joint water commission; (2) matters related to sharing the Orto-Tokoy (Kasansay) reservoir; and, (3) operation of water facilities located in the border area.

The **first meeting of the joint water commission** between the Ministry of Water Management and the Water Resources Service was held in Bulan Sogottu village, Issyk-Kul province (August 19).

The parties approved the regulations of the joint commission and discussed the draft Agreement on water cooperation and other relevant matters.

Source: MWM Ruz

Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan)

See Subsection 4.1. Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan.

4.8. Tajikistan – Turkmenistan

High-level contacts

The President of Turkmenistan had a meeting with the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Tajikistan who visited Turkmenistan as part of the Inter-parliament Forum of the Central Asian States and the Russian Federation (May 12, Ashgabat).

During **telephone talks**, the country leaders commended the expansion of trade and economic cooperation, cultural-humanitarian and parliamentary relations and other aspects of strategic partnership between the two countries (March 15, January 27, 2023).

During the **political consultations** between the foreign ministries of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, the sides exchanged views on the current state of and prospects for bilateral relations in the political, economic

and legal spheres, expressed their readiness to improve the legal framework for cooperation, expand trade and economic ties, and develop transport links between the two countries (November 10, Ashgabat).

Bilateral working groups

The 11th meeting of the Joint Turkmenistan-Tajikistan Inter-governmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Science-Technological Cooperation was held in Ashgabat on November 9-10. The participants have discussed the key aspects of cooperation in energy, industry, agriculture and water, as well as joint activities in transport domain. The parties also underlined a need to form a bilateral Business council, open trading houses, and enlarge the Inter-governmental Commission.

4.9. Tajikistan – Uzbekistan

High-level contacts

The President of Tajikistan paid an official visit to Uzbekistan on June 2-3. The leaders discussed such points as enhanced bilateral ties and substantial expansion of the cooperation agenda. The ceremony of launching the construction of the Javan Hydroproject on the Zarafshan River was held as well. The Presidents signed the Declaration on strengthening eternal friendship and alliance. At the level of governments, ministries and agencies of the two countries, 11 docu-

ments were signed to further enhance the multifaceted Uzbek-Tajik cooperation.

The presidents of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan had **bilateral talks** on the sidelines of the meeting of the Council of CIS States and the Summit of Heads of State "Central Asia – Russia" (October 14, Astana) and the fourth Consultative meeting of the Heads of CA States (July 21, Cholpon-Ata). They discussed the cooperation aspects on trade, industry, agriculture, energy, transportation and logistics.

³³ ratified by the Law ZRU-805 of 30.11.2022

³⁴ ZKR 111 of 28.11.2022

In the course of **telephone conversations** the country leaders addressed the urgent matters of country relationships, friendship, good neighborliness and strategic partnership, focusing on implementation of the agreements reached before and on regional security.

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

The Working group did not gather in 2022.

4.10. Turkmenistan – Uzbekistan

High-level contacts

The President of Turkmenistan paid a **state visit** to Uzbekistan on July 14-15. In the course of the meeting, a number of documents were signed. Those covered all aspects of country cooperation, including the Agreement between the Governments of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on management, protection and sound use of water resources along the Amu Darya River. The document provides for coordination of hydraulic construction or reconstruction efforts. Also, it states that "... the use of water resources in the Amu Darya River basin should be guided by the international law and the interests of all riparian countries."

Following the talks, the Presidents made a joint statement, where, among other things, they "...commended the work of the Inter-governmental Commission for Water and welcomed the outcome of its second meeting..." and noted "... the importance of continuing constructive dialogue on equitable and sound transboundary water use in Central Asia."

The Parties: (1) "... consider the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) to be a universal platform for joint implementation of environmental and scientific-technological projects and programs aimed at environmental rehabilitation of regions affected by the Aral Sea disaster"; (2) will "...facilitate the work in this format, while considering such an approach as an important element for achieving sustainable development in CA"; (3) "...underlined the need for relevant agencies of the two countries to work closer together to mitigate global climate change processes, develop and undertake joint measures for prevention and control of natural and man-made hazards."

They also "underlined the importance of the regional program "Green Agenda for Central Asia" launched during the Third Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States..."

The President of Turkmenistan had a **working visit** to Uzbekistan to take part in the SCO Summit (September 15) as an honorary guest. In the course of the meeting, the leaders discussed priority areas of cooperation, which was successfully developed on both bilateral and regional scale.

Cooperation on the Zarafshan River

In June, as part of the state visit of the President of Tajikistan to Uzbekistan, construction of the Yavan Hydro-project on the Zarafshan River was launched. The estimated cost of the project is \$282 million, while the expected generation is 700-800 MkwH.

Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)

See Subsection 4.2. Kazakhstan-Tajikistan.

The President of Uzbekistan paid an **official visit** to Turkmenistan on October 20. The parties discussed bilateral cooperation in trade-economic, energy, transportation-logistics, water, agrarian and other spheres. A number of documents were signed, including the Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation on hydrometeorology, the Plan of actions for further expansion of agricultural cooperation.

In the course of **telephone conversations** the Presidents discussed key points of bilateral cooperation.

Bilateral commissions and working groups

The second meeting of the joint Turkmen-Uzbek Inter-governmental Commission for Water led by the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, A. Yazmyradov and the Deputy Prime-Minister of Uzbekistan, Sh. Ganiev was held on July 1 in Dashoguz, Turkmenistan. The participants discussed such matters as organization of joint water monitoring along the Amu Darya River through automation of water accounting and data transmission, joint bank protection and river training work, inventory of interstate waterworks facilities, border crossing, conditions of the Tuyamuyun reservoir, etc.

On July 1, 2022, the first consultative meeting of the heads of water agencies of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan was held in Dashoguz, Turkmenistan. The Turkmen delegation was headed by the Chairman of the State Committee for Water Management, G. Baydjanov, and the Uzbek delegation was led by the Minister of Water Management, Sh. Khamrayev. The parties discussed the issues related to operation of the Tuyamuyun hydroscheme.

Source: MWM Ruz

Trilateral Commission for the lower Amu Darya

Water cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is also maintained within the framework of the trilateral Commission on water allocation in the lower Amu Darya, which includes BWO Amu Darya as well. In 2022, the Commission had 12 meetings. By January 2023, the Commission gathered 237 times in total.

Source: BWO Amu Darya

