



SECTION 8

Activities of International
Partners in Central Asia

8.1. Asian Development Bank



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has provided technical assistance support and made investments in the water sector in the Central Asia region since its first lending (to Kazakhstan) in 1998. Investments to date, totaling \$ 4.4 billion, have included support for flood management, irrigation and drainage, clean water supply, sanitation, hydro-power, institutional reforms, and knowledge and capacity building.

ADB has assisted the [Central Asia Regional Economic \(CAREC\) Program](#) for regional cooperation and integration. This partnership of 11²¹⁷ countries supported by six multilateral institutions promotes development through cooperation, leading to accelerated

growth and poverty reduction. In 2017, CAREC introduced agriculture and water as a key pillar of the CAREC 2030 strategy. In 2020, ADB approved technical assistance (TA) to support the development of the CAREC water pillar, emphasizing economic aspects and sustainable financing of water resources management. The TA project prepared a scoping study in 2020, focusing on five Central Asian republics that largely share the water resources in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins. The report presented the framework of the water pillar, comprising three blocks: (i) climate-resilient and productive systems, (ii) sustainable water resources and water services, and (iii) nexus solutions and cross-sector learning. The TA included preparation of a longlist of potential Water Pillar projects discussed with government agencies, inter-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders at the [regional workshop](#) in November 2022.

Projects in Central Asia in 2022

Investment approvals in 2022 included a \$150 million loan and \$3 million grant for **Uzbekistan**, for climate adaptive water resources management in the Aral Sea Basin. This [project](#) is following a long-term, strategic, and knowledge-based approach. It will deliver climate adaptive solutions to water resources management by modernizing irrigation and drainage in selected sub-projects within the Amu Darya and (selective reaches of the) Zarafshan River Basins in Uzbekistan.

In addition, ADB is supporting an upstream climate change assessment. This will identify investment projects focused on increasing resilience to climate change impacts to support basin-wide stakeholders in coping with climate stress and dwindling water supply. A combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches is being used through climate risk modeling and stakeholder engagement to better understand the underlying vulnerabilities and barriers to scaling adaptation.

In water supply and sanitation, ADB has provided financing totaling \$522 million since 2016 to support infrastructure in Tashkent Province and western Uzbekistan. The latest project in Tashkent Province, a [sewage improvement project](#) (\$161 million loan), was declared effective in September 2022. In 2022, ADB approved the [Integrated Urban Development Project](#) which will support inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban infrastructure and services (mainly water supply

and sanitation) in four secondary cities (Djizzak, Havast, Khiva, and Yangiyer). It will (i) enhance livability for residents and visitors, including persons with disabilities; (ii) support green and resilient economic recovery targeting women; (iii) accelerate digital transformation, particularly in the tourism and water sectors; and (iv) increase the quality, coverage, efficiency, and reliability of urban services. All projects include water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) components to address the spread of COVID-19.

In **Tajikistan**, the [Climate- and Disaster-Resilient Irrigation and Drainage Modernization in the Vakhsh River Basin Project](#) (\$30 million grant) became effective in May 2022. The project aims to increase climate and disaster resilience, water productivity, and income for farmers in selected areas of the Yovon irrigation and drainage system. It has a significant focus on gender inclusiveness, recognizing the significant role women play in agriculture and water resources management. It is ADB's first gender equity project in irrigation in the Central Asia region, so Tajikistan will be a leading gender champion in this sector. About 6,700 farmers, of whom 12% are female, and 4,200 homestead (kitchen) gardens, which are mostly managed by women, will benefit from improved water service delivery.

In Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan, ADB has been supporting the government with several investments in water supply and sanitation through the ongoing [Dushanbe Water Supply and Sanitation \(WSS\) Project](#). Additional financing of \$88.43 million for this project was approved in 2022 (consisting of a \$79.2 million grant from ADB and \$9.2 million from the government). This will improve WSS infrastructure and services for 352,000 people in Shomansur District.

For the **Kyrgyz Republic**, the [Landslide Risk Management Sector Project](#) became effective in April 2022. ADB contributed a \$23.5 million loan and a \$11.5 million grant. This is the bank's first integrated preemptive landslide risk reduction investment to safeguard rural communities in the country. Climate change is expected to increase landslide frequency because of earlier snowmelt, melting permafrost, and more intense precipitation events. This innovative project will embed international best practices and advanced technologies for improved risk reduction and monitoring. It will combine engineering and nature-based solutions with community-based planning and capacity building for sustainable long-term landslide safety.

Source: Asian Development Bank, <https://www.adb.org/>

²¹⁷ Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, People's Republic of China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

8.2. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia.

Headquartered in Beijing, AIIB began operations in January 2016 with 57 founding Members and by the end of 2020 have grown to 100 approved members worldwide.

AIIB's **2022 Annual Meeting** themed "Sustainable Infrastructure Toward a Connected World" was focused on connectivity and regional cooperation, both of which were among AIIB's core thematic priorities (October 26-27).

The Bank has committed to making climate finance 50% of its approved projects by 2025. At COP27, AIIB **announced** that it has joined the Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment (CCRI), fostering a strategic partnership to apply climate-resilient solutions (November 14). Also, the AIIB Board of Directors has approved an **update** to the Bank's Energy Sector Strategy (November 22).

Under the updated Strategy, AIIB will focus its energy investments on supporting its Members to achieve their long-term climate goals and net-zero/carbon neutrality commitments and to accelerate the just transition towards secure, affordable, and sustainable energy access for all.



Projects in Central Asia in 2022

AIIB is considering providing funding in the amount of \$40 million to 100-MW **Shokpar Wind Power Station** (total cost: \$135 million). The Project will be located in an adjacent plot to the Zhanatas Wind Power Plant (PD000225-PSI-KAZ) in the Sarysu district of Zhambyl Region, Kazakhstan.

The 897MW **Solar PV Portfolio** (Samarkand, Jizzakh and Sherabad solar PV plants) was proposed for financing (\$145 million) in 2022, approved in March 2023.

AIIB approved a \$248.4-million loan for the "Bukhara Region Water Supply and Sewerage Project" Phase II (BRWSSP II). The Project Objective is to provide access to safely managed water and sanitation services in the Bukhara Region, Uzbekistan and strengthen the operational performance of the water utility of the region. The \$437.6-million first phase was approved in April 2020 and is implemented currently.

Source: www.aiib.org/en/index.html

8.3. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was established in 1991. It invests in projects facilitating the transition to open market, as well as the development of business activity. The EBRD work in Central Asian countries on water issues is very broad, including water supply, wastewater treatment, RES, and increased climate resilience.

Projects in Central Asia in 2022

Kazakhstan was among the top three countries, where EBRD operates, in terms of most effective project performance. To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 306 **projects** in Kazakhstan amount to €9,755 million. Current portfolio of projects is €2,842 million.

In 2022, EBRD adopted the latest Kazakhstan strategy for 2022-2027 and set the following priorities: fostering private sector competitiveness, connectivity and strengthening economic governance; support Kazakhstan's green pathway to carbon neutrality and climate resilience; promote economic inclusion and gender equality through private sector engagement.

A **loan** of up to €252 million in KZT equivalent was approved for comprehensive modernization of the existing Almaty Combined Heat and Power Plant 2



("CHP-2"), with full replacement of coal by natural gas as a primary fuel in order to reduce CO₂ emissions and improve air quality in the Almaty city. Up to KZT 3.3 billion (€6.9 million) were allocated under **GrCF2 W2 – Shymkent WWTP Capacity Extension Project** to a privately owned utility in the city of Shymkent. The money will be used for the wastewater treatment plant capacity extension and the wastewater network rehabilitation.

In the **Kyrgyz Republic**, EBRD focuses on fostering sustainable growth; enabling SMEs to scale up; promoting the sustainability of public utilities; strengthening the financial sector; and supporting critical infrastructure. To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 221 **projects** in the Kyrgyz Republic amount to €879 million. Current portfolio of projects is €173 million.

A number of projects was approved in 2022 for modernization of water supply services in Kyrgyz municipalities, including the **Bazar-Korgon Water Sub-Project**, **Aidarken Water**, **Kadamzhai Water Sub-Project**, **Kok-Dzhangak water**, and **Tash-Komur water**.

In **Tajikistan**, EBRD focuses on all sectors, including energy, agribusiness, municipal services, etc.

To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 157 projects in Tajikistan amount to €899 million. Current portfolio of projects is €513 million.

Thousands of small and microbusinesses across Tajikistan were able to continue their activity and take on board green technologies thanks to a financial package of up to \$ 6 million mobilized by EBRD for the country's leading microlending institution, **Imon International** (Imon). Two other banks – **Humo** and **Arvand Bank** – also received financing under the GCF-Green Economy Financing Facility (GEFF) Tajikistan.

In **Turkmenistan**, EBRD focuses on expanding private sector operations in the corporate and financial institutions sectors, targeted policy dialogue and fostering coordination among IFIs and donor organizations.

To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 87 projects in Turkmenistan amount to €329 million. Current portfolio of projects is €32 million.

EBRD continued its **Advice for Small Businesses** programme in 2022 in Turkmenistan, e.g., by supporting growth of Turkmen dairy producer.

In **Uzbekistan**, the EBRD's investment areas range from renewable energy to banking. The EBRD has expanded its presence and now operates through a principal office in Tashkent and satellite offices in Andijan and Urgench. To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 129 projects in Uzbekistan amount to €4,015 million. Current portfolio of projects is €2,335 million.

EBRD continued to invest in renewable energy power generation and low-carbon technologies in Uzbekistan by arranging two syndicated loans worth \$520 million to help construct and put into operation **two wind power plants** with a total installed capacity of 1GW in the Bukhara region. Also, EBRD organized \$74 million financing package for **Zarafshan wind power plant**. The Bank provided \$10 million to one of the country's largest private lenders, Ipak Yuli Bank, to improve **access to green technologies** for local households and SMEs.

Source: www.ebrd.com

8.4. European Union



The European Union's engagement with the region has significantly expanded since the early 1990s. In 2019, the Council adopted a new **EU Strategy on Central Asia**. The new-generation bilateral Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCAs) form a cornerstone of EU engagement.

The 18th **EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting** took place in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) on 17 November. During the Ministerial meeting participants confirmed their

commitment to strengthen EU-Central Asia cooperation to support a green and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery. At the **first EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference: Global Gateway** held in Samarkand on 18 November the high-level participants affirmed the central contribution that enhanced and sustainable connectivity can make to addressing the challenges presented by climate change, water scarcity, and a growing demand for green energy and recalled their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

EU Regional Environment Programs in Central Asia

EU is currently supporting two regional cooperation programs in Central Asia on environment-related issues: (1) Central Asian Water and Energy Program (**CAWEP**) implemented jointly by EU, WB, Switzerland and UK to promote water and energy security at the regional and national levels (see **World Bank**); (2) Regional coordination and support to improve the EUCA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation (see further).

“European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)”

The WECOOP project (third phase from October 2019 to October 2022) aims to enhance environment,

climate change and water policies at national levels in Central Asia through approximation to EU standards and to promote investments in relevant sectors with the aim of contributing to measurable reductions in man-made pollution, including CO₂ emission. The project activities include support to the EU-CA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation and its Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (WGECC), as well as implementation of the EU Green Deal's international dimension in Central Asia to advance climate action.

Activities in 2022

NPD. The National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on IWRM is a platform for discussing the most pressing issues of the integrated use of water resources and for search of agreed solutions. It is implemented within the EU-funded project “European Union Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) in Central Asia” by UNECE in cooperation with OECD as part of the WECOOP. The NPD in **Uzbekistan** was launched with the First Steering Committee meeting in 2022 (hybrid format, September 27). The participants discussed Uzbekistan's achievements, challenges and priorities related to the water policy and agreed on a way forward for the NPD implementation. In **Kazakhstan**, the NPD has been operating since 2013. At the 7th NPD meeting, the participants discussed the issues of pro-

tection and use of groundwaters, water and sanitation, pollution (including emergency pollution) in the Syr Darya River, transboundary cooperation, and the results of the work of international partners (Astana, December 14). In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, NPD meetings took place in early 2023: (1) 18th Steering Committee Meeting of the NPD on IWRM, to discuss the national Water Strategy and Water Code developments, economic and financial instruments related to water sector enhancement, cooperation between national stakeholders as well as international partners (Bishkek, February 3); (2) 16th Steering Committee Meeting of the NPD on IWRM, to address progress in implementation of the water sector reform in the Republic and discuss national commitments on the Water Action Agenda (Dushanbe, February 15).

Study-tours. (1) "Integrated environmental permitting and introduction of Best Available Techniques

(BAT)" for national experts from the CA countries (Czech Republic, [September 19-23](#)); "Sustainable business practices: the Latvian experience" for young entrepreneurs from CA – finalists and winners of the International Green Business School competition (Latvia, [September 26-30](#)).

Contests. 6 winners out of 52 participating journalists in the EU contest "Switching to renewable energy sources – our contribution to carbon neutrality" were announced and given the opportunity to participate in the study tour to the Netherlands. The contest was organized with a purpose to increase public awareness on the urgent need to switch to renewable energy sources in order to meet the rapidly growing energy demand and tackle the energy security challenges.

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu>, <https://wecoop.eu>

8.5. German Society for International Cooperation

As a globally active federal enterprise for international development cooperation, the German Society for International Cooperation/Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH/ supports the German Federal Government in implementation of its development policy goals. Since the beginning of the 1990s, GIZ has been implementing programs and projects in Central Asia.

Regional Programs and Projects on Water, Environment, and Development

The project 'Green Central Asia: Transboundary dialogue on climate, environment and security in Central Asia and Afghanistan' (2020-2024) commissioned by Federal Foreign Office supports science-based regional political dialogue on questions of environmental and climate-related security risks. The project operates based on the Regional Action Plan which was approved by all five Central Asian countries; in there, four priority areas for joint action were identified: climate sensitive water and land management, cooperation on international environment instruments and waste management with a focus on e-waste. In 2022, 'Green Central Asia' supported the work of three operational inter-governmental working groups on the elaboration of a regional climate change adaptation strategy, mutually beneficial water-energy mechanism and glacier methodology and monitoring with representatives from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Water Resources, Environment, Energy, Hydrometeorological Services and others.

The Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam – German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), the Martin Luther University Halle Wittenberg (MLU) and the German-Kazakhstan University (DKU) provided scientific support and capacity building measures, namely the production of high-resolution climate projection for the entire Central Asia, hydrological modelling, analysis of annual, seasonal flow and extremes (floods and droughts) under climate change (PIK), reservoir, lake,



GLOF and natural hazard monitoring (GFZ), drought map tool for drought monitoring and forecasting in the Aral Sea Basin (MLU), elaboration of Policy Briefs for Decision Makers as a "Bridge between Science and Policy" (DKU).

Under the Green Central Asia Initiative, two BMZ-funded Regional Projects operated in all five Central Asian countries. 'Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia' (2021-2025) aims at strengthening integrative land use management approaches on national and regional levels with a focus on forestry and pastures and is supporting cross-border cooperation on protected areas and watershed management.

"Climate risk management in Central Asia" (2022-2026) aims at improving transboundary climate and disaster risk management in Central Asia with a focus on developing capacity for transboundary water-related climate risk reduction. Beneficiaries are watershed associations, the regional disaster management center and stakeholders from selected watershed councils.

Under 'Green Central Asia', the new BMZ project '**Climate-sensitive water management in Central Asia**' was developed in 2022, which starts in March 2023.

Other Regional Programs and Projects. The regional project '**Ecologically oriented development in the Aral Sea Region**' (ECO ARAL) (2020-2024/BMZ) supports the governments of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to ensure ecologically sustainable and climate-resilient economic development in the Aral Sea region across borders. The project supports the public and private sector in identifying and piloting sustainable business activities to showcase and inform about environmen-

tally friendly production and income generation. Local and national administrations and academic institutions are supported in applying GIS as well as in territorial development and investment planning. All activities of the project use sustainable economic growth potentials in the Aral Sea Region to support the population in securing livelihoods and protecting ecosystems.

The global Programme 'Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains' (Cotton) (2019-2024/BMZ) worked to increase the sustainability in the cotton supply chain by promoting sustainable farming methods, strengthening sustainable capacities for local value addition in the textile sector and fostering global knowledge exchange. The programme worked closely with IWMI to promote water-saving technologies in cotton production in [Uzbekistan](#), as well as to support cotton producers in effective water use.

'Capacity Development for climate policy in the countries of South-East, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Phase III' (2017-2022/ BMWK IKI) focused on benefits of regional cooperation on the energy-water-land nexus transformation in Central Asia and aimed to accelerate dialogue on the barriers and opportunities of cooperation around energy, water and land use in Central Asia. As a direct outcome of the project, the OECD produced a discussion paper containing background analysis on the energy-water-land use nexus in each country of Central Asia and experience of and opportunities for cooperation around the nexus across countries. The discussion paper informed on the preparations for a regional policy dialogue led by the OECD on the benefits of cooperation on the energy-water-land nexus.

Global Programme 'Policy Advice for Climate-Resilient Economic Development' (CRED) (2019-2022/BMU IKI) supported the ministries of economy in Kazakhstan, Georgia and Vietnam in integration of climate risks into their long-term economic and adaptation planning using macro-economic modelling as a tool for assessing the economic impact of climate change and adaptation measures. In Kazakhstan, CRED elaborated the 3.kz macro-economic model which helped to assess GDP and employment effects of improved irrigations systems under different climate change scenarios.

'Technology Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Rural Areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan' (TCCA-RA) (2019-2023/BMZ and DKTi (German Climate Technology Initiative)) aims at improving the access to digital geospatial data where water is part of it. National spatial data infrastructures are jointly being developed in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This allows geographical information to be gathered, exchanged, evaluated and applied. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the project supported the development of NSDI (National Spatial Data Infrastructure) as a tool for sharing the geospatial data (data with geographic location) between the stakeholders. Data from National Water Information Systems is integrated with Cadastral, DRR and other sectoral information systems. In Tajikistan the project launched an Earth Observation Laboratory to provide a service on monitoring of glaciers, creating the risk profiles, land cover and land use mapping and other remote sensing based studies. Climate related Local Adaptation Plans were developed.

National Projects on Water, Environment, and Development

A number of projects continued its activity in 2021: (1) 'Integrated Rural Development Project' (TRIGGER) (2019-2024/EU, BMZ), supports the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan in implementing a "river to market" approach in selected river basins that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. It provides technical assistance to River Basin Organizations in the field of Integrated Water Resources Management and the Water-Energy-Food-Environment Nexus, improves water access and water use efficiency for small-scale farmers and assists producer groups and village advisors with value chain development support, all with a holistic approach to improve water security and resilience of small-scale farmers' livelihoods and agri-food systems in Tajikistan; (2) "Rural development in Southern Kyrgyzstan" under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (2018-2023/BMZ); (3) "Biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction through community-based management of walnut forests and pastures" (2018-2023/BMZ); (4) Green Economy and Sustainable Private Sector Development in Kyrgyzstan (2020-2023/BMZ).

Source: GIZ Green Central Asia Program, <https://www.giz.de>

8.6. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development



The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a multidisciplinary inter-governmental organization comprising 38 member countries and provides a unique forum and the analytical capacity to assist governments to compare

and exchange policy experiences, and to identify and promote good practices through policy decisions and recommendations.

The OECD is working to help developed and developing countries meet the water challenge. The OECD contributes analyses to improve the information base, identifies good practices, and provides a forum for exchanging country experiences. OECD work on water focusses on the economic and financial dimensions of water management and improving governance.

In addition to analytical work, the OECD works with selected regions and countries to facilitate the reform of water policies. The OECD has enhanced its convening power and capacity to structure discussion among stakeholders on water issues, by setting up international initiatives including the [Roundtable on Financing Water](#), the [Water Governance Initiative](#), and the [Network of Economic Regulators](#). The OECD facilitates the [Global Commission on the Economics of Water \(GCEW\)](#) which was convened by the Government of the Netherlands and launched in May 2022 with the aim of redefining the way water is valued and governed for the common good.

The [OECD Council Recommendation on Water](#) captures policy guidance developed by the OECD and can inspire water policy reforms in countries around the globe. Non-member countries are welcome to adhere to the Recommendation with a view to create a momentum for water policy reforms that contribute to water security and sustainable growth. The Recommendation on Water includes high-level policy guidance on topics relevant for water resources management and the delivery of water services including managing water quantity, improving water quality, managing water risks and disasters, ensuring good water governance and ensuring sustainable finance, investment and pricing for the water and water services.

Activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in 2022

In Central Asia, the OECD works with partner countries through its [GREEN Action Task Force](#). The GREEN Action Task Force annual meeting in 2022 was held on [June 30-July 1](#) in Tbilisi, Georgia, with an [agenda](#) that reviewed progress with implementation of the programme of work for 2021-22 and a substantive focus on the environmental effects of COVID-19 related recovery measures in the EECCA region, the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on climate and energy policies in the European Union's Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries and an update on work on the energy-water-land use nexus in Central Asia.

The OECD assists the countries in EECCA in adopting a more integrated approach to water management, applying robust economic and financial analyses and improving multi stakeholder participation. It also helps in identifying and removing some of the key obstacles to effective and efficient water management, while reflecting countries' level of socio-economic development. This work is part of the programme of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI), for which the OECD is a strategic partner, together with UNECE, and is aimed at improving river basin management and water governance frameworks. National Policy Dialogues are jointly facilitated by the OECD and UNECE and fed by robust analytical work, often lead to practical implementation of policy advice. The OECD focuses on the economic aspects of water resources management (policy coherence, managing water for growth and making the best use of economic instruments for water management), and on the financial sustainability of water supply and sanitation services (strategic and mid-term financial planning and financial support mechanisms to the sector). Work in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus is carried out within the frame of the [EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme](#) which the OECD implements in partnership with the Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

In Central Asia, recent work has focussed on the analysis of energy, water and food security as part of a new programme of work on "nexus". This work led to the publication of a study on the [Benefits of regional co-operation on the energy-water-land use nexus transformation in Central Asia](#) and also included a high-level policy dialogue in Almaty, Kazakhstan on [June 16 2022](#) where Central Asian officials met to discuss the benefits of cooperation towards resource security and to comment on proposals for a new [IKI funded programme of work on the energy, water, land-use nexus transformation](#). This work will be launched in 2023 and the OECD will partner with SIC-ICWC, EBRD, FAO and UNECE on a five-year regional programme.

Source: OECD

8.7. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has a long history in supporting its Central Asian participating States in the area of regional water management, focusing on water governance and support for transboundary water management, training and capacity development, research and development of standards and legislation.

Activities in 2022

The [OSCE Program Office in Bishkek \(POiB\)](#) continued its support to the water resources management in Kyrgyzstan by supporting the activities of the Chu-Talas Water Commission. Technical and expert support was provided to the Commission in collection of surface water sampling and further analysis of water quality in the transboundary Chu-Talas river basin.



The POiB contracted an expert to support the Commission in analysis of sampling data and preparation of a report on the state of water quality in the Chu-Talas river basin. The analytical report with recommendations on improvement of the environmental situation on the river basin was presented in the annual concluding meeting of the Commission held in Bishkek in November. The POiB supported also the representatives from the Government of Kyrgyzstan in participation in the round table on the safety of the Kirov water reservoir (Almaty, March).

The OSCE Program Office in Dushanbe (POiD) in 2022, supported the Second High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028". It facilitated an exchange visit for the Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation (ALRI) and the Tajik National Commission for Irrigation and Drainage (TajNCID) to Uzbekistan for learning from better practices of rehabilitation of pump stations. Furthermore, the POiD organized the Science for Diplomacy workshop targeting young professionals from Tajikistan to facilitate long-term water-related science networks. The POiD, in cooperation with the ALRI, developed three by-laws to the Water Code on Land Reclamation and Irrigation and two by-laws developed in 2022 were approved. The Office, in co-operation with the ALRI facilitated a TajNCID meeting to update members on new and ongoing projects in the irrigation sector, as well as facilitated Women and Water session to learn from experiences and challenges. Further building on 2021 achievements, the POiD facilitated the Ministry of Health and Social protection to conduct a survey on the quality of drinking water supply. The POiD also supported implementation of the National Water Strategy 2030 through an intervention on decentralized energy security in remote areas.

The OSCE Programme Office in Astana (POiA) facilitated the activities of the Chu-Talas Water Commission, with support of national experts, conducted a technical examination of the reservoirs and determined necessary maintenance and repair work for Kirov and Orto-Tokoy water reservoirs in the Kyrgyz Republic. The POiA in co-operation with the OSCE Program Office in Bishkek also supported a working group meeting on environmental protection under the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Chu-Talas Water Commission, where participants from Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic discussed the results of laboratory water quality assessments and also reviewed a joint annual report on water quality and the hydrometeorological situation in the Chu and Talas river basins. As part of the POiA's efforts to enhance national legislation in line with good practices in the efficient and sustainable management of water resources, the POiA provided expert assistance in developing a new edition of the national Water Code.

In 2022, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat (CiA) placed particular focus on strengthening the capacities of state officials from the State Committee of Water Management of Turkmenistan, the Hydrometeorology Service under the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, as well as non-govern-

mental organizations on the use of innovative solutions and digital systems for sustainable water management. The participants of a two-day online seminar increased their knowledge about the use of open-source data to improve hydrological water balance modeling and develop a monitoring system to protect freshwater resources in CA from pollution, as well as on satellite remote sensing and its application for the analysis of irrigation efficiency and crop mapping in the Central Asian region (June). The seminar was one of a series of events in the framework of the Centre's support to the implementation of the Concept of Water Sector Development in Turkmenistan up to 2030 and the promotion of the regional dialogue on sustainable water management.

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) continued to support the participating States to implement their commitment and strengthen dialogue and co-operation in the area of water management. As part of the project "Women, Water Management and Conflict Prevention – Phase II", the OCEEA, in partnership with CAREC and SIWI continued the organization of monthly capacity-building sessions for the [Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan](#). In June, OSCE Secretary-General Helga Schmid and the [Network's members](#) participated in the Second High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Sustainable Development,' leading to the UN Water Conference, co-organizing the Women Water Forum and **directly contributing to the Dushanbe Declaration, 'From Dushanbe 2022 to New York 2023'**, where women's voices were strongly reflected. The Network also took part in the [Women in Water Diplomacy Global Network Forum](#), on the margins of 2022 Stockholm World Water Week: the first event of its kind brought together women water experts and supporters from the Nile and Central Asia-Afghanistan Networks across Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. During the Session "[A Rising Tide: Shared Vision for Women in Water Diplomacy](#)", participants from around the world shared experiences and presented the [new Global Strategy 'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security'](#) (August 30).

Among other activities, the OCEEA also developed a series of [podcasts](#) dedicated to female role models sharing their experience in the water sector in partnership with the [Central Asia Youth for Water Network \(CAY4W\)](#).

Source: OSCE

8.8. Swiss Confederation (SDC and SECO)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

The **Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia (2022-25)** features a special focus on water, infrastructure and climate change, aiming at the Central Asian states that collaborate, use evidence and take concrete steps to manage their water resources with a basin approach in a climate-resilient, sustainable and inclusive way.

The Cooperation Programme is implemented by the two operational arms of Switzerland's International Cooperation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Cooperation (SECO) under the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the Swiss programs focus on supporting the national water sector reforms, water supply and sanitation and disaster risk reduction/climate change adaptation.

In the **Kyrgyz Republic**, Switzerland supports the promotion of IWRM through the [National Water Resources Management Project](#) in cooperation with WB. The project assists the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to implement the Water Code adopted in 2005. In addition to the above mentioned key activity, the project includes a capacity building program that will increase the capacities to manage irrigation more efficiently.

As part of the IWRM approach, Switzerland has also been supporting the urban water supply program funded by SECO. To date, the program has been implemented in 6 major cities of the Kyrgyz Republic, benefitting nearly half of population of the country residing in urban area.

In **Tajikistan**, Switzerland continued its support to the water sector reform in the Tajik Syr Darya Basin and continued its multiple activities in the water supply and sanitation sector. In addition, Switzerland supported the city of Khorog to put in place the institutions, knowledge base and systems required as a precursor to the resilient implementation of infrastructure invest-

ments in Khorog as a basis for sustainable economic development.

In **Uzbekistan**, Switzerland supported the Ministry of Water Resources in the development of the Water Sector Development Concept 2020-2030 (Water Sector Concept) and the Road Map to implement its main elements in 2021-2023, which is to serve as a basis for the strategic and regulatory IWRM framework.

In addition to the works in these three focus countries, Switzerland is also active at the transboundary and regional level, including through its program on water and peace, the [Blue Peace Central Asia initiative](#) (BPCA), which aims at supporting the countries in reaching a mutual understanding and agreement in terms of regional water resources management. In addition, BPCA has continued the support to the [Central Asia Youth for Water network](#) (CAY4W), with the aim of encouraging the emergence of a strong and capacitated young voice for water in Central Asia. BPCA has supported the development of academic modules on water education in the sectors of water policy/diplomacy, WASH and water modeling.

Switzerland further contributes to the Central Asia Water Energy Development Program (CAWEP), a multi-donor trust fund managed by the World Bank (see "[World Bank](#)").

New emerging topics are taken into account such as the efficient and sustainable use of transboundary groundwater resources, where Switzerland joins forces with UNESCO on a programme on Governance of Transboundary Aquifers in Central Asia.

Source: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

8.9. United States Agency for International Development

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works across the whole Central Asia region to transform water-sharing problems into cooperation that would lead to better and equitable water management.

USAID also supports projects that promote stability, economic prosperity and healthy ecosystems in Central Asia.

Activities in 2022

The USAID Regional Water and Vulnerable Environment activity, with a total budget of \$21.5 million, aimed at strengthening regional capacity to manage shared water resources and mitigate environmental risks in the Syr Darya and Amu Darya River basins, has [continued](#).

The following results were achieved: (1) a delivered lecture series on the water-energy-food-environment nexus (WEFE nexus) to enhance an understanding of the WEFE nexus approach and increase its implemen-



tation in the region; (2) launched a Community of Practice e-platform for knowledge exchange and network building among water professionals in the region; (3) provided trainings on capacity building to Small Basin Councils (SBCs) of Isfara, Murghab and Padshaata rivers ; (4) established National Intersectoral Committees (NIC) in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan uniting all the sectoral ministries within the WEFE nexus project and the Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) of the NIC. The RCC meets twice a year. Particular attention is paid to the reflection of national interests in the regional agenda of the countries for effective and sustainable transboundary water management; (5) organized an expedition for water professionals, officials and journalists from all countries of Central Asia along the Syr Darya River basin ([May 18-30](#)).

Within the framework of the project, about \$1.6 million was allocated for the implementation of the second phase of the Environmental Restoration of the Aral Sea activity (ERAS II). ERAS II will focus on planting new forests in the Aral Sea region of Uzbekistan, building on the ongoing first phase, which focuses on the northern part of the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan. Additionally, USAID will promote bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to advance the restoration of the Aral Sea ecosystem and improve livelihoods in the region.

The USAID [Power Central Asia](#) activity was continued with a total budget of \$40 million to assist the five Central Asian countries to achieve their national and regional priorities in energy security, regional connectivity and transition to clean technologies. The first Central Asian Energy Forum on “Energy Transition and Innovation” was organized within the project on [September 13-15](#).

Source: www.usaid.gov

8.10. World Bank



Activities in 2022

Central Asian Water and Energy Program

The [Central Asia Water and Energy Program \(CAWEP\)](#) continued implementation of its phase III in 2022. CAWEP is a multi-donor trust fund with a total budget of \$ 12.9 million financed by the European Union, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The program development objective is to strengthen the enabling environment to promote water and energy security at regional level and in the beneficiary countries (five Central Asian countries and Afghanistan), aligning with the World Bank’s regional engagement framework that aims at strengthening connectivity and increasing the economic value of water and energy resources in the region. The long-term vision of the program is to promote sustainable development and livelihood security within the region.

The activities fall into three thematic pillars: (1) Water Security; (2) Energy Security; and (3) Water-Energy Linkages. CAWEP-funded activities have strong links with the ongoing and pipeline World Bank investment operations and have contributed to the design of more than \$720 million worth of World Bank investments through analytical work and technical studies. Ongoing water activities focus on the following key issues: (1) facilitating regional dialogue on water and energy and supporting a process of reforming the IFAS; (2) national water management; (3) improving management of sub-basins with transboundary significance; (4) modernizing irrigated agriculture to improve water productivity with a focus on increased awareness.

Regional dialogue

In cooperation with the Executive Committee of the IFAS, CAWEP hosted a “Central Asia Regional Water Cooperation” Forum (June 6), as an integral part of the Second Dushanbe [UN Water Action Decade Conference in Dushanbe](#). The Forum explored re-

gional and national priority development issues and opportunities relating to water and highlighted the importance of strengthening regional institutions and progressing institutional reforms. Later, CAWEP and EC-IFAS hosted a Regional Preparatory Workshop “Central Asia towards the UN 2023 Water Conference” where country representatives agreed to finalize a draft Joint Statement for the [UN Water Conference in New York](#), summarizing their respective commitments to regional cooperation (Tashkent, September 20).

CAWEP is actively continuing its support to the structured reform process for the IFAS institutions by facilitating Regional Working Group (RWG) meetings. The RWG discussions have five stages: (i) updating IFAS objectives; (ii) identification of gaps; (iii) recommendations for organizational structure; (iv) financing; and (v) required legal framework.

CAWEP’s [Central Asia Knowledge Network \(CAKN\)](#) continues to enhance regional knowledge and professional capacity in the areas of water resource management, energy and climate change in the Central Asia region.

The CAKN, in partnership with the Central Asia Regional Environmental Center (CAREC), delivered an online training on Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Transboundary Waters (March 2-3). The training aimed to raise awareness of, promote, and mainstream gender aspects of efficient water resource management in Central Asian countries. At a regional conference on strengthening networking and cooperation among scientific institutes in Central Asia the CAKN presented the [CAKN online academy platform](#) (Dushanbe, June 10). The objective of the online academy platform is to convene a broad group of water sector actors including academia, young professionals, development partners, sector practitioners, and think-tanks, from across Central Asia. It allows actors to share international and regional practice as well as experience in teaching water engineering disciplines with a focus on linking education, research, and practice. Along with the courses developed by Central Asian academics in 2021 under the CAKN, the platform offers micro-online courses developed by the Solutions for Water Living Lab project, based on the results of the pilot projects.

National water management

CAWEP, in partnership with the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), arranged two international workshops on safer management of water infrastructure in Central Asia for water experts from the Central Asian region. The first workshop shared international best practices in the management of hydraulic structures and their safety, including European methods of water management based on the Slovak practical experience (Bratislava, Slovakia, September 27-29). The second workshop brought together more than 60 technical experts and policy makers to showcase the best global practices of hydraulic structures management, including risk assessment and management, support for the monitoring systems, early warning systems, and the use of information and communication technologies (Almaty, Kazakhstan, November 30).

In water supply and sanitation, stakeholder consultations were conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic to discuss existing construction norms and standards (SNiP) for water supply and wastewater systems (January and March). CAWEP supported participation of international experts to share global best practices. The revised SNiPs propose new water consumption norms, recommend new technologies (including for small-scale wastewater treatment), and revise requirements for water supply and wastewater systems.

In cooperation with the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) and the EU under 'Central Asian Dialogue on Promoting Intersectoral Financing based on the Water-Energy-Food Relationship' project (Phase II), CAWEP also financed the demonstration project 'Treatment of siltation at the Ruslovoe Reservoir of the Tuyamuyun Hydrocomplex' to promote regional water-energy cooperation at facility level. Rapid sedimentation of the Ruslovoe Reservoir is impacting effective operation of the Tuyamuyun Hydroelectric Complex. At the 5th meeting of a Technical Working Group meeting, cost-effective sedimentation removal and technical mitigation measures were discussed, and technical solutions were presented, including for reservoir sludge reuse (Urgench, Uzbekistan, May 11-12). Turkmen and Uzbek specialists discussed these solutions, which could significantly improve hydrocomplex operations. The pilot project is undertaking a cost-benefit analysis and developing a business plan for investors to support implementation of the proposed measures.

In 2022, CAWEP supported several trainings for national hydrometeorological agencies of the five Central Asian countries. The online training course for prac-

tioners and policymakers in energy and hydrometeorology sectors in Central Asia demonstrated how climate data can be used to inform smart, clean energy transitions, and to foster dialogue and partnerships between hydrometeorological agencies and energy service providers (February 21-March 4). CAWEP in collaboration with the German Weather Service (DWD), the World Bank and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) piloted [ICON-In-the-Cloud \(ICONIC\) Numerical Weather Prediction \(NWP\) on Commercial Cloud Services for Central Asia](#). High resolution NWP is critical for improved forecasting of meteorological conditions, especially of extreme events. A training for IT and NWP experts from the Central Asian hydrometeorological agencies provided basic insights into the structure and functional scope of the [ICON model](#) and its operation (October 12-14). In addition to trainings, CAWEP assessed the needs and capacities of [Kazhydromet](#) and [Uzhydromet](#) and developed roadmaps to strengthen national hydromet and multi-hazard early warning systems and services to better meet the needs of government, communities, and the business sector.

Sub-basin Water Management

CAWEP is financing a feasibility study and environmental and social impact assessment for the proposed [North Aral Sea Development and Revitalization Project](#). The project will help to restore wetlands and reduce the impacts of windblown salt and dust from the seabed. It would also create conditions for enhancing local livelihoods and provide services and opportunities for the local communities in the Aral Sea and Syr Darya basin in Kazakhstan. The feasibility study and environmental and social impact assessments are at final stages and will be completed by end June 2023.

Irrigation Modernization

In irrigation, CAWEP is supporting a remote sensor-based irrigation assessment of the performance of irrigation and drainage sectors in Central Asia. The activity is also surveying irrigation and drainage service providers (including water user associations) in four Central Asian countries to assess and benchmark their performance. The brief based on the performance assessment will be provided to the governments of Central Asian countries in 2023. For Uzbekistan, CAWEP developed a policy note on how to improve irrigation sector and presented it during the consultations meetings (Tashkent, May).

Source: World Bank, «CAWEP»

