

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA  
INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR WATER COORDINATION  
OF CENTRAL ASIA



# **BULLETIN**

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of Central Asia

Interstate Commission for Water Coordina- tion of Central Asia	<b>BULLETIN</b> <b>№ 1 (114)</b>	January 2026
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## Meetings of Central Asian Heads of States

### Seventh Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Heads of States

On 15-16 November 2025, the Seventh Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Heads of States was held in Tashkent. The meeting was chaired by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev.



The summit was attended by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev; the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev; the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Japarov; the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon; the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov; and the Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, Kaha Inmadze.

The agenda included issues related to strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia, as well as the implementation of joint projects and initiatives in priority areas. Participants also exchanged views on topical issues of regional and international politics.

Following the Seventh Consultative Meeting, a Joint Statement by the re-

gion's leaders was adopted.

In addition, during the summit, the heads of state approved a number of key documents. These included an appeal to UN member states to support the Kyrgyz Republic's candidacy for non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for 2027–2028, a decision on the full participation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the format of Consultative Meetings of Central Asia, and the Concept of regional security and stability.

A Catalogue of Security Risks in Central Asia, together with measures to prevent them, was also approved for the period 2026–2028.

## **Address by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, at the Seventh Consultive Meeting of the Central Asian Heads of States<sup>1</sup>**

**(extract)**

Fifthly. We should maintain a strong focus on ecology, climate change, and water scarcity.

The Concept for Green Development of Central Asia was presented at the First Samarkand Climate Forum, and we count on your support in adopting this document.

In view of the growing water shortage in the region and its negative impact on sustainable development, we propose declaring 2026–2036 the Decade of Practical Actions for the Rational Water Use in Central Asia.

We believe it important to actively engage neighboring Afghanistan in regional dialogue on water sharing in the Amu Darya basin.

Effective water management is not possible unless water professional education is supported.

To this end, we intend to establish a Regional Water Management Competence Center at the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [https://uza.uz/ru/posts/vystuplenie-prezidenta-respubliki-uzbekistan-shavkata-mirziyoeva-na-sedmoy-konsultativnoy-vstreche-glav-gosudarstv-centralnoy-azii\\_783510](https://uza.uz/ru/posts/vystuplenie-prezidenta-respubliki-uzbekistan-shavkata-mirziyoeva-na-sedmoy-konsultativnoy-vstreche-glav-gosudarstv-centralnoy-azii_783510)



As you know, we will be hosting the International Forum on Water Conservation in our country next year. We look forward to your support and active participation.

[...]

## Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev<sup>2</sup>

Water security, Tokayev said, is becoming increasingly critical for the region.



– Over the past five years, our countries have updated their water policies. Given the transboundary nature of water issues, I believe it is important to harmonize our water strategies, also by scaling up best water conservation practices.

In the future, consideration could be given to adopting a Central Asian Water Framework Convention in accordance with international standards. Such a document would establish uniform principles in this area and help avoid potential disagreements. The summit of the heads of state-founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, to be held in Astana in April next year, would be an appropriate platform for discussing these proposals. This meeting will be held concurrently with the Regional Environmental Summit. We look forward to your active participation, the Head of State said.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://akorda.kz/ru/prezident-kazahstana-prinyal-uchastie-v-vii-konsultativnoy-vstreche-glav-gosudarstv-centralnoy-azii-16101037>

## Address by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Japarov<sup>3</sup>

The Head of State noted that, at a time when new opportunities are opening up for the region, it is more important than ever to maintain a spirit of mutual trust and unity.



In this context, Sadyr Japarov proposed that the countries of the region coordinate their positions and present a single front in the Central Asia+ formats, in particular by organizing consultations between foreign ministries with partner countries on the eve of summits.

He also stated that Kyrgyzstan is open to implementing mutually beneficial projects, including the hydropower projects, and considers the effective use of Central Asia's shared resource potential to be a key priority.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://president.kg/ru/news/21/39810>

## Address of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon<sup>4</sup>



During his address, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, put forward a number of proposals to enrich cooperation in the field of science, education and culture.

In particular, Emomali Rahmon proposed the establishment of an International Innovation and Education Center in Central Asia.

Environmental issues were identified as one of the key areas of cooperation, as climate change, melting glaciers, and prolonged dust storms have a direct impact on food security in the countries of the region.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://www.president.tj/event/news/53748>

## Address by the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov<sup>5</sup>

(extract)

[...]

The enormous potential of the Central Asian countries underscores the urgent need for further active economic cooperation to the benefit of all states in the region.

Among the strategic areas, I would highlight transport, energy, trade, and industrial and technological cooperation.



[...]

Turkmenistan is also ready to discuss further concrete steps to strengthen energy partnership, which goes beyond pipeline projects.

Today, we are emphasizing the importance of expanding the electric power sector and creating a robust network for the generation, supply, and consumption of electricity in our region and around it. This will provide a reliable material foundation for the stability of the entire power supply system and safeguard against potential negative external factors.

Among the pressing priorities, we see the development of cooperative

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<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/ru/post/100732/vystuplenie-prezidenta-turkmenistana-serdara-berdimuhamedova-na-vii-konsultativnoj-vstreche-glav-gosudarstv-centralnoj-azii>

production chains in industry and the agro-industrial complex, more active engagement of business in establishing joint ventures of various profiles across our countries, and the expansion of cross-border and regional trade.

We look forward to further strengthening water cooperation in the region on the basis of equality, mutual respect, understanding, and solidarity.

In general, we advocate for increased joint environmental efforts in the region, particularly on sensitive topics such as saving the Aral Sea and combating desertification. We welcome the involvement of UN agencies in the environmental agenda of Central Asia and the establishment of its specialized offices in the region. We are convinced of the need for our countries to develop coordinated environmental diplomacy at the UN and to draw growing international attention to the challenges facing Central Asia.

[...]

## **Address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev<sup>6</sup>**

**(extract)**

[...]

Today, Azerbaijan and Central Asia serve as a connecting link - a bridge between East and West, between North and South.

The development of the Middle Corridor is of strategic importance for our countries. Joint efforts to modernize transport and logistics infrastructure, as well as to synchronize and digitize customs procedures, open broad opportunities to increase freight volumes, strengthen economic stability, and expand cooperation in international markets.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://ru.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/4118194.html>



[...]

The Caspian Sea Submarine Cable project opens prospects for joint export of electricity to global markets.

## State Visits

### **State visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, to the Republic of Uzbekistan<sup>7</sup>**

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, arrived in Uzbekistan on a state visit on 14 November 2025.

Negotiations between President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev were held in a small format at the Kuksaroy residence.

<sup>7</sup> Source: (1) <https://www.uzdaily.uz/ru/prezident-kazahstana-pribyl-v-uzbekistan-s-gosudarstvennym-vizitom/> (2) <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2025/11/15/mirziyoyev-i-tokayev-dogovorilis-ukreplyat-strategicheskoye-partnerstvo-i-zapuskat-novyie-sovmestnyie-proyekty> (3) <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2025/11/15/lidery-uzbekistana-i-kazahstana-proveli-vtoroye-zasedaniye-vysshego-mejgosudarstvennogo-soveta> (4) <https://dknews.kz/ru/politika/375040-prezidenty-kazahstana-i-uzbekistana-soglasovali-novye> (5) <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/8665>



In the course of negotiations, particular attention was paid to expanding mutually beneficial partnerships in key sectors, including energy, transport, chemical industry, agriculture and water management, environmental protection, IT, and other areas.

The importance of further developing interregional contacts was also noted, and an agreement was reached to hold the first Council of Heads of Regions of the two countries in Kazakhstan in 2026.

The heads of state exchanged views on regional and international agenda.

On 15 November, the second meeting of the Supreme Intergovernmental Council was held and chaired jointly by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

The meeting addressed pressing issues of bilateral cooperation in trade and economy, transit-transport, water-energy, as well as cultural and humanitarian areas.

Both sides expressed their willingness to expand mutually beneficial cooperation in energy transportation and processing, energy conservation, as well as in green technologies and IT solutions.

Effective measures will be taken to further strengthen water and environmental cooperation. The parties welcomed the signing of the Agreement on the Joint Management and Use of Transboundary Water Bodies during the visit.

Reports were also delivered by deputy prime ministers and the ministers of energy, transport, and culture under the negotiation agenda.

Following the discussions, a number of important decisions were adopted at the second meeting of the Supreme Intergovernmental Council.



Following fruitful negotiations, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, signed a joint statement.

The heads of state also adopted decisions of the Supreme Intergovernmental Council on the creation of bilateral working groups on geology, extraction of rare and rare-earth metals, forecasting the flow of transboundary rivers, and the establishment of a Council of Heads of Regions of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

During the visit, several other documents were signed, including an agreement on the joint management and rational use of transboundary water bodies.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev awarded Kassym-Jomart Tokayev the Order of Oliy Darajaly Dustlik (Friendship of the Highest Degree), recognizing his outstanding personal contribution to strengthening the relations of friendship, good neighborliness, strategic partnership, and alliance between Uzbekistan and

Kazakhstan.

## **State Visit of the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, to the Republic of Uzbekistan <sup>8</sup>**

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimukhamedov, paid a state visit to Uzbekistan on 16–17 November 2025.

The high-level talks focused on further strengthening the strategic partnership and expanding cooperation between the two countries in political, trade and economic, transport, water-energy, and cultural and humanitarian spheres.



The heads made a decision to develop cooperation in the field of environmental protection and rational water use, including the issues of regional importance for Central Asia.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.uzdaily.uz/ru/uzbekistan-i-turkmenistan-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zaiavlenie-i-pakt-soglashenii/>

During the visit, the leaders participated in the launch ceremony of the Shavat-Dashoguz trade border zone. Discussions on current international and regional issues were also planned.

Following the negotiations, a joint statement was signed by the heads of state, along with more than a dozen intergovernmental, interregional, and inter-agency documents covering virtually all areas of cooperation, including trade, transport, culture, healthcare, and the environment. Key agreements included:

- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on further development of agricultural cooperation;
- 2026–2030 Roadmap for forestry cooperation between the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- Protocol on Amendments to the Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the prevention of emergency situations and the liquidation of their effects (originally signed on 25 November 2013).

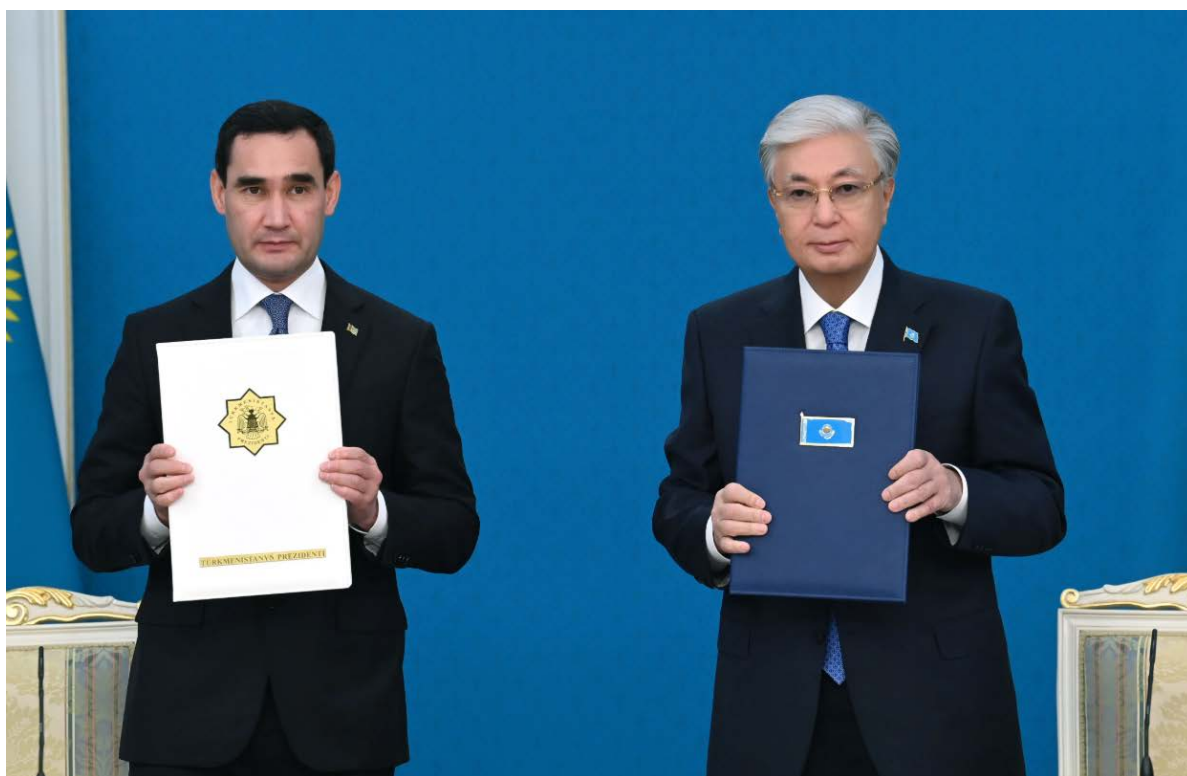
At the Kuksaroy residence, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov was awarded the highest state honor of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Order of Oliy Darazhali Dostlik. Serdar Berdimuhamedov's contribution to the expansion of multifaceted Uzbek-Turkmen relations was highlighted, particularly in the development of trade-economic and cooperative ties. Key initiatives included the launch of the Shavat-Dashoguz border trade zone and active collaboration in energy, transport, and logistics.



## State Visit of the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, to the Republic of Kazakhstan<sup>9</sup>

On 24–25 November, President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, paid a state visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

During the visit, priority areas for bilateral cooperation were discussed. In particular, issues related to trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian, as well as transport and logistics cooperation were considered. Special attention was paid to the implementation of joint projects in the field of energy, industrial cooperation, agriculture, IT, education, and medicine.



Following the talks, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, signed a joint statement.

In the presence of the heads of state, members of the official delegations exchanged a total of 11 intergovernmental and interagency documents, including:

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<sup>9</sup> Source: <https://dknews.kz/ru/politika/375798-kazahstan-i-turkmenistan-formiruyut-novye-plany>

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan on cooperation in the field of veterinary medicine;
- Memorandum of Understanding between the National Agricultural Science and Education Center of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan and the Grain Crop Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan;
- Memorandum of Scientific Cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the President of Kazakhstan and the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev awarded President Serdar Berdimuhamedov the Altyn Qyran Order, recognizing his personal contribution to strengthening friendship, mutual understanding, and strategic partnership between the two brotherly countries.



## Participation of Central Asian Countries in Global Water Processes

### President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Proposed the Establishment of an International Water Organization under umbrella of the United Nations<sup>10</sup>

President Tokayev participated in the International Forum dedicated to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality, held in Ashgabat on 12 December 2025.



During the Forum, he presented a number of ambitious proposals on regional security and preservation of unique water bodies. In particular, he proposed the development of a special intergovernmental program to prevent the destruction of ecosystem and the shallowing of the Caspian Sea.

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<sup>10</sup> Source: <https://orient.tm/ru/post/93663/tokaev-kazakhstan-mvo-oon>

Noting that there is currently no a specialized UN organization focused exclusively on water, Kazakhstan proposed establishing an International water organization. Astana intends to initiate a process of international consultations on this proposal at the Regional Environmental Summit in April 2026.

The importance of providing assistance to Afghanistan was also highlighted, with the UN Regional Centre for Sustainable Development Goals in Almaty called upon to serve as an important platform for coordinating cooperation.

## **Kazakhstan Ratifies Protocol on Access to Safe Drinking Water <sup>11</sup>**

President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, signed a law ratifying the Protocol on Water and Health. The protocol aims to ensure access to safe drinking water and to combat water-related diseases.

The Protocol to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes was adopted in London in 1999. It is the first global treaty to focus primarily on water supply, sanitation, hygiene, and health issues.

Ratification will enable Kazakhstan to access advanced technologies and expertise in the treatment and delivery of safe drinking water, as well as in wastewater management. It will also allow the country to participate in the development of joint surveillance systems and emergency response plans.

## **Representative of Uzbekistan Elected to the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on Water and Health**

Professor Abdulhakim Salohiddinov from Uzbekistan was elected as a member of the Compliance Committee during the 7th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The meeting was held on 5-7 November in Budapest. This election recognizes Uz-

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<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://www.caravan-info.pro/kazahstan-ratificiroval-protokol-o-dostupe-k-bezopasnoj-pitevoj-vode/>

Uzbekistan's growing expertise and commitment to sustainable water management and improved sanitation across the pan-European region.

Professor Salokhiddinov serves as Vice-Rector for International Cooperation at the National Research University "Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers" (TIAME-NRU). He also heads the UNESCO Chair in Water Diplomacy, Water Management, and Environmental Protection. His extensive experience in water management and water diplomacy will make a valuable contribution to the Committee's work.

The election coincided with the announcement that Uzbekistan has officially acceded to the Protocol on Water and Health, becoming the 29th country to assume legal obligations under this unique international agreement.

The Compliance Committee under the Protocol on Water and Health is a key body responsible for facilitating, promoting, and securing compliance with the obligations under the Protocol. The Committee operates as an advisory, non-confrontational, and non-judicial body aimed at assisting countries in meeting their commitments under the Protocol. The Committee is composed of nine independent experts in law, health, and water management, elected by the Meeting of the Parties to serve in their personal capacities.

The main functions of the Committee include:

- Reviewing national reports on the establishment and achievement of water supply and sanitation targets;
- Monitoring and assessing compliance with reporting requirements;
- Considering specific cases of non-compliance, as submitted by Parties, the Secretariat, or the public, and developing recommendations to assist Parties in fulfilling their obligations.

Professor Salokhiddinov's election underscores Central Asia's growing role in shaping the global agenda on water and health.

## **SIC ICWC of Central Asia has been Selected as Co-coordinator of the “Water Diplomacy” Theme for the 11th World Water Forum**

The Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (SIC ICWC) has achieved significant international recognition by being selected as co-coordinator of the “Water Governance and Diplomacy” theme, one of the six key themes of the 11th World Water Forum.

Chosen from among 163 candidate organizations worldwide, the SIC ICWC will share this important role with the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia, the host country of the Forum.

As co-coordinator, the SIC ICWC will play a leading role in shaping the theme’s agenda, setting priorities, and organizing thematic sessions. This work will include consolidating global experience and developing practical solutions to be presented at the 11th World Water Forum, scheduled to take place in Riyadh in March 2027.

This appointment recognizes the SIC ICWC’s unique expertise in trans-boundary water management, water diplomacy, and regional cooperation in Central Asia - a region where water management is of critical importance.

Such engagement of SIC ICWC will ensure that the experience and challenges of Central Asia are well represented and integrated into the global dialogue on water, contributing to the Forum’s overarching theme: “Action for a Better Future.”

## International and Regional Events

### Regional Dialogue on the Role of Women and Youth in Water and Energy in Central Asia

On November 3–4, 2025, Bishkek hosted the regional dialogue “Gender and Youth in Water and Energy: Building Inclusive Futures for Central Asia.” The event was organized by GIZ in partnership with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), the Helmholtz Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and the Central Asia and Afghanistan “Women and Water” Association (CAAWWA). The dialogue brought together representatives of women’s and youth networks from across the region, international and governmental organizations, and independent experts.

Its overarching goal was to enhance the participation of women and youth in water and energy governance through dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration, thereby strengthening regional cooperation.

Discussions centered on the need to empower women and young professionals in decision-making processes related to climate, water, and energy policy. Participants emphasized that climate change amplifies existing socioeconomic challenges, while the voices of women and youth remain underrepresented in strategic planning and policymaking.

The two-day program featured plenary sessions, expert presentations, panel discussions, and interactive formats. Participants shared successful practices from Central Asian countries, including the youth initiative “Drops of the Future”, as well as the activities of the “Women in Water Diplomacy” and “Women in Energy” networks. In group discussions, participants identified key barriers and opportunities for inclusive engagement—ranging from limited access to education, finance, and professional development, to underrepresentation in decision-making processes.

Oygul Usmanova delivered a presentation highlighting achievements and future perspectives for expanding the role of women and youth in the water sector of Central Asia on behalf of SIC ICWC. She outlined the Center’s ongoing initiatives, including the establishment of a Regional Center of Excellence under the IKI project “Regional Mechanisms for a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Transformation of the Energy–Water–Land Nexus in Central Asia.” The future Center of Excellence is to unite experts across the region to promote science diplomacy and strengthen capacity through joint research in support of evidence-

based decision-making. Notably, women and youth are actively involved in shaping the Center's concept through consultations and surveys.



Overall, the dialogue fostered professional networking and laid the basis for cooperation in developing sustainable and inclusive water and energy policies for Central Asia.

## Introductory Presentation of the WE-ACT Decision Support System

On 10 November 2025, the MiraX decision support system was presented at the office of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in Tashkent. The MiraX system has been developed as part of the regional WE-ACT (Water and Energy for Climate Transformation in Central Asia) project.

Background: The WE-ACT project, implemented from 2023 to 2026, focuses on the Naryn and Karadarya Rver basins—key tributaries of the Syr Darya River. Its primary goal is to strengthen the resilience of Central Asia’s water and energy systems to the impacts of climate change. Funded by the European Union, the project was implemented by a consortium of international and national organizations coordinated by the Technical University of Munich (TUM). WE-ACT aims to develop and apply modern mechanisms for water management in the Naryn and Karadarya basins, considering both climate change and rising water demand.



The event aimed to introduce participants to the MiraX software, highlighting its key features, architecture, and potential applications in water management and climate adaptation across Central Asia.

The MiraX system is a new-generation digital platform that integrates analytical modules for visualizing climate and hydrological data, assessing water footprints, forecasting droughts, analyzing climate change scenarios, and automatically generating reports. It is developed as a unified decision-support tool for national and regional water management organizations.

The event brought together representatives of BWO Syr Darya, the National Institute of Geology and Mineral Resources (NIGMI), the Scientific Research Institute of Irrigation and Water Problems (SANIIRI), and SIC ICWC, including specialists L. Sichugova and G. Khamdamova. During the session, participants discussed the significance of the MiraX platform as an innovative instrument that enhances the quality of climate and hydrological assessments, supports water use planning, and promotes data exchange between research institutes and water management organizations.

The presentation showcased operation of the system's key analytical modules, including tools for drought analysis, crop water footprint assessment, and precipitation and temperature forecasting. Participants were also introduced to the platform's automatic report generation and time series visualization features, which streamline the work with climate data.

At the conclusion of the event, all participants received certificates acknowledging their participation in the introductory session and their familiarity with the MiraX system's functionality.

Participants emphasized the high potential of MiraX to support climate adaptation initiatives and to strengthen cooperation between research and water management organizations across the region.

## **Regional Workshop of the Blue Peace Central Asia Initiative**

On 13 November 2025, the regional workshop “Water Challenges in Central Asia” was held in Tashkent as part of the Regional Steering Committee of the Blue Peace Central Asia (BPCA). The event was organized by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The seminar brought together representatives of water management agencies from Central Asian countries, as well as experts from international and regional organizations, research centers, and universities. Participants discussed key water challenges facing the region, potential solutions, and priorities for further joint action.

The workshop’s objectives were to develop a shared vision of the region’s medium- and long-term water challenges, explore opportunities for climate adaptation, agree on the BPCA Work Plan for 2025–2026, and enhance regional coordination and engagement of the Central Asian states.

In their opening remarks, representatives of BPCA and SDC stressed the importance of improving data quality and transparency in the water sector, strengthening scientific cooperation, promoting innovation and knowledge sharing, and developing qualified human resources. Several major water-related challenges in the region were highlighted. Those included chronic underfunding of the sector, lack of data and coordination among research organizations. A shift from joint resource management to benefit sharing was proposed.

Three core components of the BPCA Initiative were presented: water diplomacy, small transboundary tributaries, and capacity building. A key principle of BPCA is to build on existing regional processes rather than create parallel structures. Accordingly, the initiative will support current working groups, including efforts on environmental flow assessments integrated into the regional water and energy working group. Under the water diplomacy component, BPCA plans to promote the exchange of water-saving and water-accounting technologies, facilitate the participation of Central Asian countries in international forums—including the Dushanbe Conference—and foster the development of a shared regional vision for water and climate.

The second component focuses on small transboundary basins. Two pilot basins will be selected where basin management and investment plans will be developed—addressing a gap that often hinders meaningful reform. Local water management organizations will prepare these documents to strengthen local expertise and ensure long-term sustainability.

The third component centers on capacity building, with a flagship activity aimed at establishing a regional master's program on water diplomacy. A draft of the program is expected to be presented by the end of next year. This component also includes initiatives to enhance the participation of women and youth, foster cooperation among universities and research centers, and support scientific projects in the field of WASH.

Z. Yarullina and O. Usmanova represented SIC ICWC in the workshop. Participation in the workshop helped reinforce the understanding that Central Asian countries share common perspectives on current water challenges, provided updated insights on the BPCA Initiative, strengthened professional contacts, and highlighted opportunities for cooperation.

Reference: The Blue Peace Central Asia (BPCA) 2025–2029, implemented with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, offers a regional platform aimed at transforming water from a potential source of tension into a driver of cooperation, trust, and sustainable development. The initiative is implemented by IWMI and IUCN in partnership with CAREC.

## **Workshop on Efficient Water Allocation in Transboundary River Basins in Central Asia**

From November 13 to 15, 2025, Osh hosted a workshop on “Effective Water Allocation in a Central Asian Transboundary River Basin: Developing a Reliable Decision Support System for Water Allocation in a Changing Climate.”

The event was organized as part of the WE-ACT project, which seeks to enhance regional water management, promote innovative digital tools, and strengthen cross-border cooperation among the Central Asian countries.



The workshop brought together experts from water management organizations, research institutions, international agencies, and other stakeholders to discuss up-to-date approaches to water management and explore solutions that enhance the region's resilience to climate change.

Key workshop sessions included:

- Demonstration and feedback on the Decision Support System (DSS) (HAEDES)
- Automatic data collection (POR)
- Hydrological forecasting / SWAT+ (TUM)
- Water Allocation Model / WEAP (FW-NL)
- Value of water

The participants explored strategies to improve water efficiency in Central Asia and highlighted the importance of joint data management and sharing among countries in the region. The digital tools and models presented showcased significant potential for improving transparency and resilience of water management decisions in transboundary basins.

The workshop provided a crucial platform for strengthening cooperation and outlined next steps for adoption of up-to-date decision support systems in the water sector of Central Asia.

## **SIC ICWC Took Part in the Launch of a Discussion Paper on Central Asia**

On 14 November 2025, the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS) launched a research report “Towards Prospects for the Development of Regional Cooperation in Central Asia.” The event brought together leading experts, as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps and international organizations.

The report, to which scholars and experts of strategic research institutes across Central Asia and UN offices contributed, offers a comprehensive historical analysis of regional cooperation and presents constructive proposals for its strengthening.

Dr. Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, took part in the meeting. In the course of lively discussion with colleagues from leading research institutes and the diplomatic community, participants examined key challenges and opportunities for cooperation in areas such as security, economy, water, and transport connectivity. Particular emphasis was put on the role of Uzbekistan’s new diplomatic course and its policy of “open regionalism” that become a catalyst for integration processes.

The event clearly demonstrated the growing demand for joint analytical studies and confirmed the need for continuous expert dialogue to develop shared approaches to advancing intergovernmental cooperation in Central Asia.

## **International Conference Discusses Water Cooperation and Uzbekistan’s New Water Code**

On 17 November 2025, Tashkent hosted an International Conference dedicated to water cooperation and the improvement of water law of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The event, organized by the Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the support of the Asian Development Bank, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SIC ICWC under the IKI project “Regional Mechanisms for the Low-Carbon, Climate-Resilient Transformation of the Energy–Water–Land Nexus in Central Asia” and other partners, brought together representatives of water agencies from Central Asian countries, key development partners, the diplomatic corps, and experts.

The formal launch of the new Water Code of Uzbekistan was in the focus of the program and set the tone for the subsequent expert discussions in the format of three thematic panel sessions. Each session was dedicated to key aspects of implementation of the new law.

Session 1 “Water Resources Management” focused on the new institutions introduced by the Code — these are water councils at the national and basin levels. Participants, including Dr. Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, discussed how these bodies can enhance water security for the population, the economy, and the environment. Experts examined the incentives needed to promote water saving and improve water-use efficiency, as well as ways for better protection of aquatic ecosystems and water quality under the new law.

The second session “Water Allocation and Accounting” focused on technical and digital tools of water management. Key topics presented by Mr. Zakir Ishpulatov, First Deputy Minister of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan, included mechanisms for setting water withdrawal quotas and limits, and the establishment of transparent systems for water accounting and monitoring. Particular attention was paid to digitalization of the water sector as a key factor for improving efficiency, transparency, and decision-making in the context of growing water stress.

The tone for the discussion in Session 3 “Financing Water” was set by the presentation of Mr. Karshiev, Deputy Minister of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan, who outlined the new financial mechanisms introduced by the Water Code. The panelists, including representatives of the World Bank, OECD, and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, discussed the pressing issue of water financing. They addressed the mobilization of large-scale investments, the development of public–private partnerships, and the importance of transparent water accounting for attracting funding. Socially equita-

ble tariff models and economic incentives for adopting water-saving technologies were also explored.

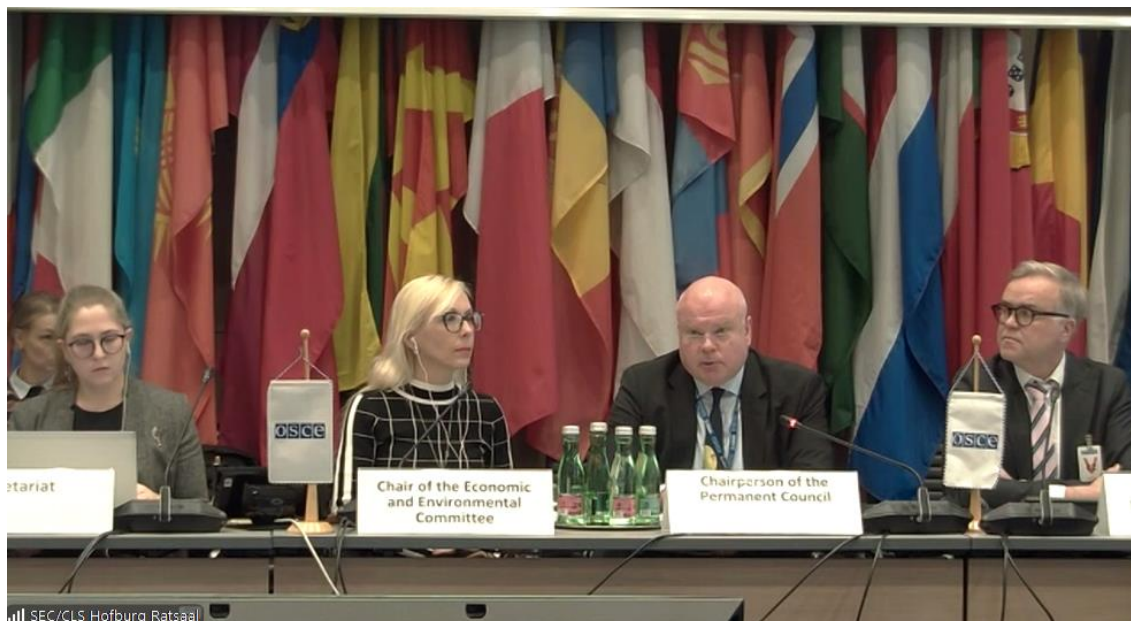
In conclusion, a meeting of the Sectoral Working Group on Water Management, Water Supply, and Sanitation was held. The participants discussed practical steps for implementing the Water Management Program for 2025–2028 and the Water Code. During the meeting, Dr. Ziganshina reported on the approval of the Gender Concept for the Water Sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan and called on participants to jointly implement the associated action plan. She also informed the group about the work led by SIC ICWC on preparation of guidelines on coordinating sectoral policies and the annual publication of the Water Yearbook: Central Asia and around the Globe, which summarizes key developments in countries and by development partners in the field of water and in related areas. Particular emphasis was placed on youth engagement. It was proposed to work together to support the formation of the “Fergana Valley Youth for Water” network, an initiative that emerged from the recent Fergana Peace Forum.

Definitively, the conference served as an important platform for open dialogue among government institutions, international partners, and experts, outlining concrete steps for moving from the adoption of the new Water Code to its effective implementation for the benefit of a sustainable water future in Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region as a whole.

## **OSCE Committee Discusses the Climate–Water Nexus with Experts from Central Asia**

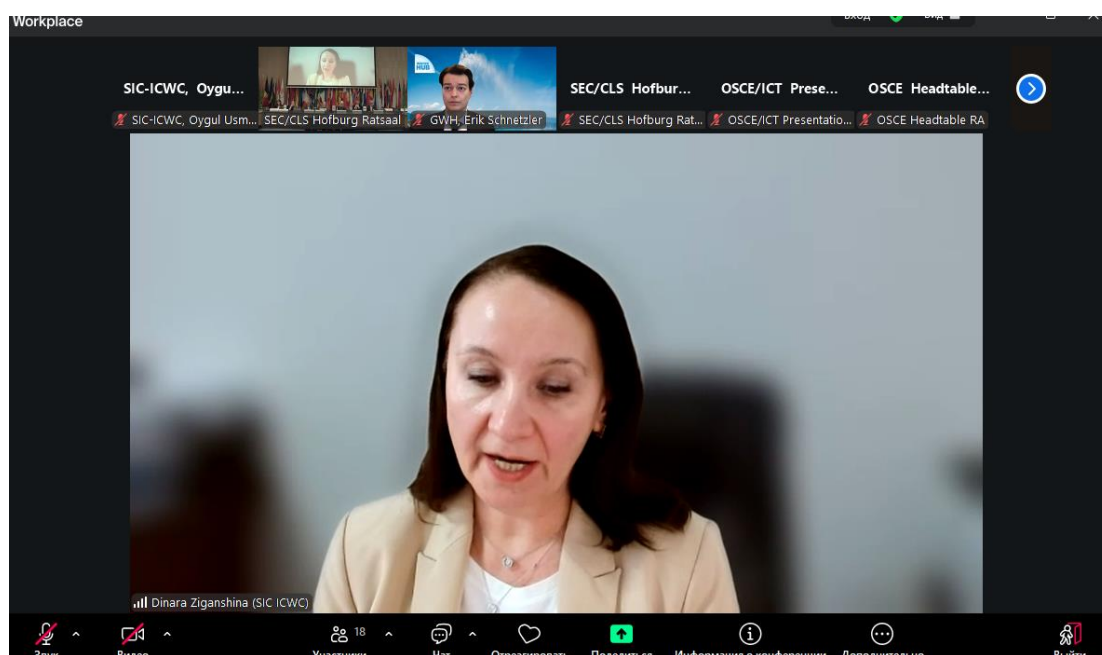
On 21 November, the Economic and Environmental Committee of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) held a thematic meeting on exploring the complementarities and added value of the OSCE’s work on the critical climate–water nexus across its region.

Chaired by Ambassador Melita Župevc, the meeting featured keynote presentations and expert contributions highlighting the interlinkages between climate change, water scarcity and security.



The discussion, Exploring the Complementarities and Added Value of the OSCE on the Climate–Water Nexus, featured presentations by Mr. Antti Rautavaara, Special Envoy for Water at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland; the SIC ICWC Director; and representatives from the Geneva Water Hub and the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat.

Mr. Rautavaara emphasized the importance of the Water Convention in the context of climate change and increasing pressure on water resources. He called for continued support for countries in the process of acceding to the Convention



In her presentation, Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, highlighted the existing OSCE framework in Central Asia, including work on environmental security assessments in the Amu Darya basin and support for inclusive diplomacy through initiatives such as the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and Drops of the Future. She also outlined SIC ICWC's work on the climate–water nexus, including the EU–UNEP project on climate, environment, peace and security in the Fergana Valley; the development of regional mechanisms for nexus cooperation; support for the Expert Platform on Water Security and Sustainable Development with a focus on nexus, women and youth; joint research on the Water Heritage in Central Asia; and ecosystem assessments in the Amu Darya basin as part of the GIZ regional programme Green Central Asia and its project Climate-sensitive water resources management in Central Asia. She proposed three areas where the OSCE could offer particular added value: developing new digital tools to support data sharing; continuing to support women's and youth networks; and promoting pragmatic, step-by-step engagement with Afghanistan.

Representatives of the Geneva Water Hub presented their current work, focusing in particular on the recently completed online course on data exchange and digitalization in the water sector, developed in collaboration with the OSCE. The course introduces current technologies for data collection and exchange, as well as institutional mechanisms that enable effective information sharing. It aims to promote cross-learning through case studies from various countries and regions. Speakers emphasized that a lot of data is available but these need to be translated and feed into political processes.



Hanna Plotnykova, representing the Secretariat of the Water Convention (UNECE), presented the joint OSCE–UNECE project on the climate–water nexus in the Dniester basin. Under this partnership, a climate adaptation strategy is being developed and specific adaptation measures are being prepared.

The meeting, held in a hybrid format from Ratzala/Hofburg, concluded with a question-and-answer session and a segment for national statements. In their statements, the participating countries unanimously emphasized that, given the unprecedented pressures of climate change on water resources, coordinated action and multilateral dialogue are essential, including with the support of the OSCE.

## **Climate Change and Resilience Technical Dialogue: Insights, Tools, and the Way Forward**

On 21 November, the final workshop of the project “Climate Change and Resilience in Central Asia” was held in Tashkent. The event was organized by UNDP offices in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan together with the European Union, the National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Hydrometeorological Agency (Uzhydromet) of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



The workshop aimed to present the project’s key results and lessons learned, as well as to discuss future actions and priorities to strengthen climate resilience initiatives across the region.

During the session “Coordinating efforts – regional initiatives for climate resilience,” a joint presentation titled “Promoting peace-oriented, locally implemented and nature-based solutions for adaptation in Central Asia: lessons from the EU–UNEP Partnership for Climate, Environment, Peace, and Stability” was delivered by Rafael Moser, UNEP Programme Manager (online), and Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC.



Their presentation highlighted project achievements to date and outlined opportunities for further synergy with national, regional, and other climate adaptation initiatives.

## 3rd Meeting of the Inter-Institutional Working Group on the Prevention of Water Pollution and Tailings Safety

On 26 November 2025, Tashkent hosted the 3rd Meeting of the Inter-Institutional Working Group (IWG) on the Prevention of Water Pollution and Tailings Safety.

The IWG was officially established on 26 July 2024 by a decree of the Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Group is comprised of representatives of national authorities responsible for environmental protection, water management, public health and sanitation, mining and geology, industrial safety, emergency management, hydrometeorology, drinking water supply, industrial enterprises, as well as academia and international partners.



During the meeting, participants reviewed progress under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Protocol on Water and Health, and agreed on the next steps for the 2026 work plan.

In line with the agenda, welcoming remarks and brief reports were delivered by officials of the State Committee for Ecology and Climate Change, the Ministry of Water Management, the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health, and the Ministry of Mining and Geology of the

Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as representatives of the Embassy of Switzerland in Uzbekistan and UNECE.

In her remarks, Lisa Gampp, Regional Adviser on Water Resources and Climate Change at the Embassy of Switzerland, highlighted that Uzbekistan faces increasing pressure on its water resources, growing climate-related risks, and a rising demand for safe and reliable water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

She emphasized that, in this context, strengthening national systems for preventing water pollution and ensuring safety of industrial facilities—particularly tailings management facilities—is essential. She also highlighted Uzbekistan’s recent accession to the Protocol on Water and Health, calling it a significant milestone not only for the country but for the entire region, as Uzbekistan is the first Central Asian state to join the instrument. This step reflects the country’s clear leadership and strong commitment to international standards.

During the meeting, the IWG reviewed Uzbekistan’s national self-assessment and action plan under the Industrial Accidents Convention. Participants discussed progress on the national roadmap for accession and learned on the experiences of countries that had previously joined the Convention, including Moldova, Sweden, and Kazakhstan.

The group also examined a draft analytical note on the impact of climate change on the safety of tailings facilities and received information from Value.Space on the use of remote sensing to support evidence-based risk management. The meeting further underscored the importance of coordinating with sub-regional efforts to assess climate risks related to tailings and highlighted the need for joint contingency planning in the Syr Darya basin, proposed to be developed with UNECE support.

Representatives of leading industrial enterprises in Uzbekistan presented information on the current situation in the field of environmental protection and measures taken to ensure the safe operation of tailings facilities.

Regarding the implementation of the UNECE Protocol on Water and Health, participants received brief information on the outcomes of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties, held in Budapest on 5–7 November 2025, noting Uzbekistan’s active participation.

Updates were also provided on ongoing efforts to strengthen the national regulatory framework for water protection, including matters related to water quality regulation.

The current state of development in improving the country's regulatory framework for water protection, including water quality regulation, was presented. In line with the agenda, IWG discussed the main findings of the recently completed baseline data analysis, which will guide the development of new na-

tional indicators. They also reviewed draft indicators aimed at enhancing the country's resilience to climate change and associated challenges, and ultimately ensuring equitable access to safe water and sanitation. Following the discussion, proposals were made on relevant indicators, timelines, and responsible institutions.



At the conclusion, the IWG agreed on a Work Plan for 2026. The plan includes measures to: advance steps toward accession to the Industrial Accidents Convention, strengthen cooperation with operators, data exchange, and preparedness planning, and continue working on target indicators under the Protocol on Water and Health in line with national priorities.

## **Strengthening Women's Leadership in Water Management**

On November 25–26, a two-day regional training and inter-network workshop on integrated water resources management (IWRM), water diplomacy, and the role of women in transboundary water cooperation took place in Tashkent. The event was held in a hybrid format and brought together members of the Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan network, as well as representatives of the regional South Caucasus chapter of the Global Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

The event was organized by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) as part of the GIZ program “Climate Sensitive Water Re-

sources Management in Central Asia” and the Blue Peace Central Asia initiative supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



The first day included theory and practice on IWRM and water diplomacy tools, including the analysis of climate risks, institutional mechanisms of transboundary cooperation and the practical tool - Blue Peace Index. Participants discussed the role of women as the key agents to prevent water conflicts and build trust among countries.

On the second day, an inter-network workshop between Central Asia and the South Caucasus was held. The participants presented activities of their respective networks, exchanged experiences, discussed shared challenges, and identified areas for future cooperation. Special attention was given to the creation of a joint research group to conduct a baseline assessment of the gender gap in transboundary water management and to develop a preliminary action plan.

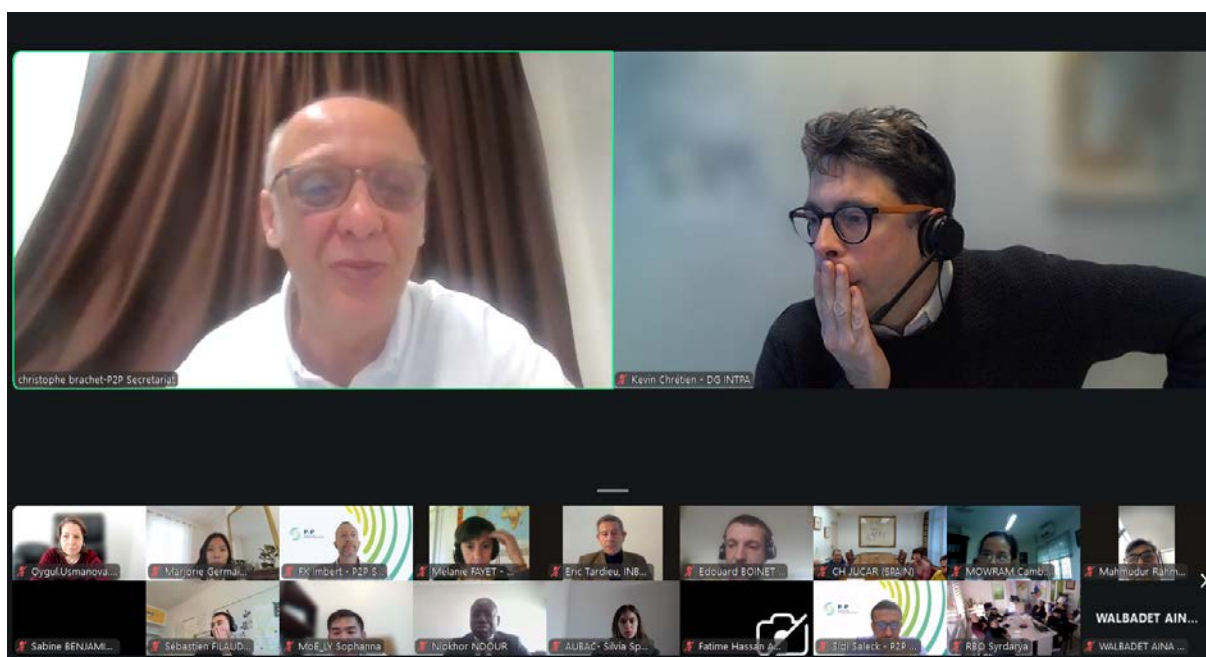
More than 20 representatives of water and related sectors of five countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus took part in the event, including both active members of the regional Women’s Network and new comers. SIC ICWC

was represented by Oygul Usmanova, a member of the regional network “Women in Water Management of Central Asia and Afghanistan.”

The event marked an important step in strengthening the expert capacity of women, expanding interregional cooperation, and promoting a gender-sensitive approach to water diplomacy in the regions.

## P2P Kick-off

More than 60 representatives of basin organizations from around the world took part in the first webinar of the new Peer-to-Peer (P2P) project, which aims to improve the sustainable management of water resources by creating a space for direct exchange of knowledge and expertise between basin organizations.



The webinar, organized by the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) with the participation of the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO), presented the institutional and technical aspects of the project and served as a starting point for building future partnerships between basin institutions.

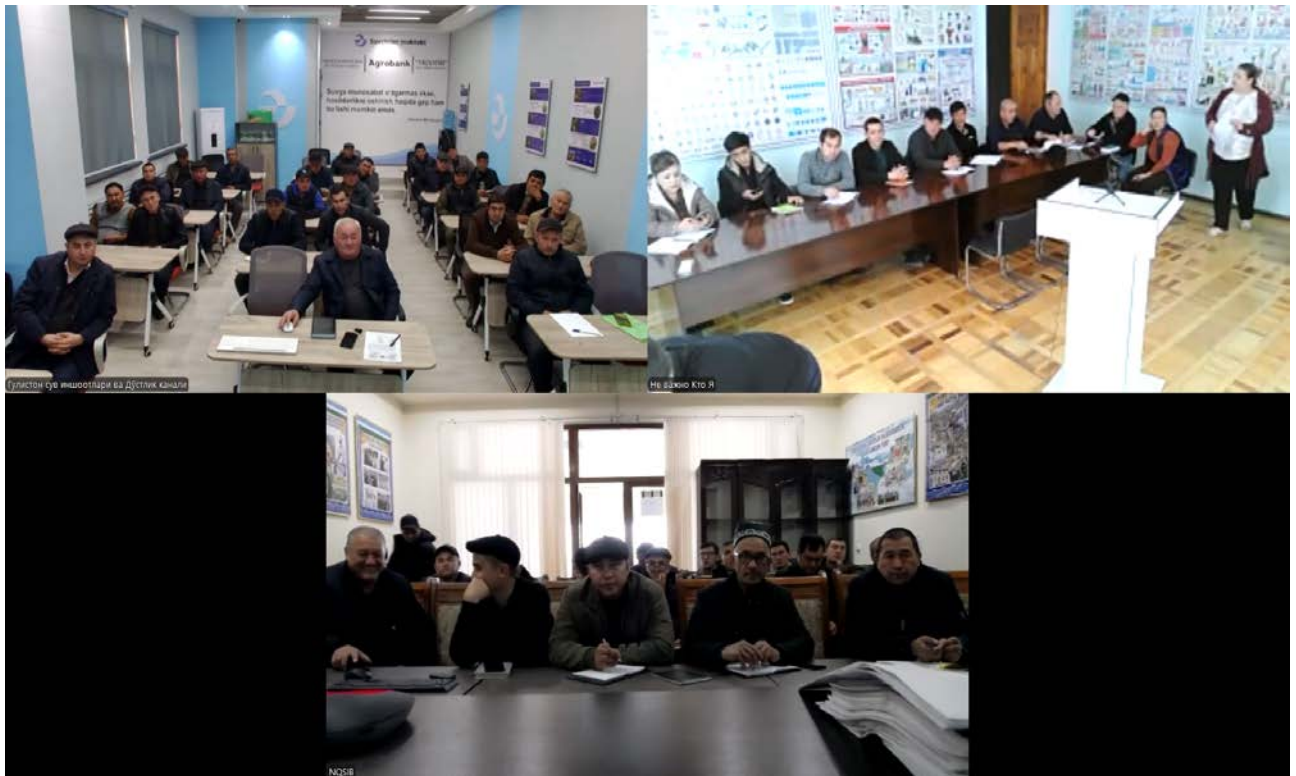
The Peer-to-Peer Project (2024–2028) is implemented as part of the INBO Twin Basin Initiative and financed by the European Commission through DG INTPA. The aim is to strengthen the role and effectiveness of basin organizations worldwide by fostering direct exchanges of experience and mutual learning.

63 organizations were selected and will establish 23 partnerships. Participants were briefed on the procedures for establishing partnerships, including the development of action plans, memoranda of understanding, and the sub-granting process. Special attention was given to the upcoming stages — the preparation of twinning applications and the work of the selection committee.

Project committee presented the structure of the IWRM didactic curriculum to be jointly developed, including its methodological framework, planned modules, and the tools for knowledge exchange. The interactive part of the webinar made it possible to gather participants' expectations and identify key priorities for further training and cooperation.

## SIC ICWC Holds Second Webinar “Basics of Water Management”

On 2 December, SIC ICWC held its second webinar for specialists of BWO Syr Darya as part of the training series “Basics of Water Management.”



More than 50 employees of BWO Syr Darya took part in the event, representing the Naryn–Karadarya, Gulistan (including the Dustlik Canal), and Upper Chirchik waterworks authorities, as well as the Charvak Reservoir Administration.

During the webinar, experts of SIC ICWC - Nazir Mirzaev and Avazbek Risbekov delivered presentations.

Nazir Mirzaev delivered the second lecture in the series titled “Water Management: General.” His lecture covered key concepts and terminology in water management—including management, governance, operation, maintenance, water supply, water use, and water disposal—explaining both their broad and narrow meanings. He also outlined the existing levels and types of water management in Central Asia.

Avazbek Risbekov delivered a presentation “Transboundary Rivers all over the World and in the Aral Sea Basin.” He provided an overview of major transboundary rivers globally and discussed international principles and mechanisms of water cooperation. Particular attention was paid to the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, the key rivers of the Aral Sea basin, highlighting their importance for Central Asian countries. He also addressed the issues related to water allocation, the negative environmental impacts, and the resulting need to strengthen regional cooperation.

SIC ICWC continues advancing training initiatives aimed build professional knowledge and skills of specialists in the water management sector.

## **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Basin Dialogue on the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya**

On 2 December 2025, the third meeting of the Basin Dialogue for Amu Darya and Syr Darya River Basins took place in Tashkent as part of the [GIZ Regional Program](#) “Climate-Sensitive Water Resources Management in Central Asia.” The program is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



The dialogue brought together representatives of foreign ministries and relevant sectoral ministries of Central Asian countries, along with international development partners. SIC ICWC delegation was headed by Director D. Ziganshina and included leading specialists Z. Yarullina and A. Dolidudko.

Participants reviewed the results of GIZ and EU projects implemented in 2025 and discussed plans for 2026. They also examined the outcomes of grant projects supported by partners from Finland and Slovakia. A central part of the agenda was the presentation of three analytical studies on priority topics carried out by experts from the basin countries under the coordination of SIC ICWC.

**Preservation of the Amu Darya ecosystems.** Z. Yarullina, leading specialist of SIC ICWC, presented the findings of a large-scale study on “Joint work to preserve ecosystems of the Amu Darya River Basin, including zones of flow formation and dispersion.” The study was conducted by an interdisciplinary team of experts from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The study proposed a package of joint actions aimed at environmental improvement in both the flow formation and dispersion zones. The presentation was complemented by the premiere of the documentary “From the Pamir Heights to the Amu Darya Lowlands,” which was filmed during field expeditions and illustrated the critical environmental challenges facing the river.

Participants highly appreciated both the analytical work and the compelling visualization of water–ecosystem interlinkages in the Amu Darya basin. They emphasized the need to further refine the recommendations presented during the Dialogue so they may be considered by national governments and development partners. These proposals could later be presented at major environmental events planned for 2026.



**Economic mechanisms of water use in the Amu Darya River Basin.** Director of SIC ICWC D. Ziganshina presented conceptual proposals on organization of joint work on the priority topic: “Consideration of economic interaction/tools/mechanisms on the Amu Darya River Basin, considering existing agreements and decisions made at the level of heads of state.” The SDC representative recommended examining, where possible, the key areas targeted by public financing and foreign investment to identify potential gaps and justify the need for additional grant resources.

**Infrastructure and climate resilience in the Syr Darya Basin.** A. Dolidudko, leading specialist of SIC ICWC, presented preliminary results of the study “Infrastructure issues, resilience to climate change (Nexus approach) in the Syr Darya basin.” The work was carried out by national experts from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan under coordination of SIC ICWC. The analytical contributions were highly valued by all participants of the Basin Dialogue.



The materials and concepts presented by SIC ICWC were reviewed by authorized national representatives, who underlined the importance of the Center’s analytical efforts in shaping scientific evidence-based approaches to transboundary water management. Based on the outcomes of the meeting, a set of protocol decisions will be drafted to guide the implementation of proposed measures throughout 2026.

## **The Seminar of the Network “Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan”**

On 28 November, SIC ICWC took part in an online seminar of the Network “Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan”. The seminar on “Strengthening Cooperation Through Data Sharing” was organized within the framework of the OSCE project “Women, Water Management and Conflict Prevention – Phase III.”

The seminar brought together women professionals across Central Asia, the South Caucasus, as well as international experts from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNEP-DHI, and leading research institutions. The discussions focused on the role of sharing hydrological, climate, and environ-

mental data in building trust, enhancing transparency, and strengthening interstate cooperation in the region.

Participants discussed the importance of data sharing for early warning, climate change adaptation, and the sustainable allocation of water resources; the technical, institutional, and political barriers that hinder effective information exchange, along with possible ways to overcome them; and the role of women water professionals in promoting inclusive approaches.


Representing SIC ICWC, network member Oygul Usmanova spoke about data exchange within the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) of Central Asia. She presented the Regional Water and Environment Knowledge Portal maintained by SIC ICWC, highlighting its ongoing modernization — including the Regional Information System — carried out under the IKI project “Regional Mechanisms for a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Transformation of the Energy–Water–Land Nexus in Central Asia.”

**Women in Water Management Network**  
**Online Seminar: Strengthening Cooperation through Data Sharing**  
**28 November 2025**


## Regional Information and Knowledge Platform of ICWC Central Asia

Oygul Usmanova,  
 Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination  
 (SIC ICWC) of Central Asia


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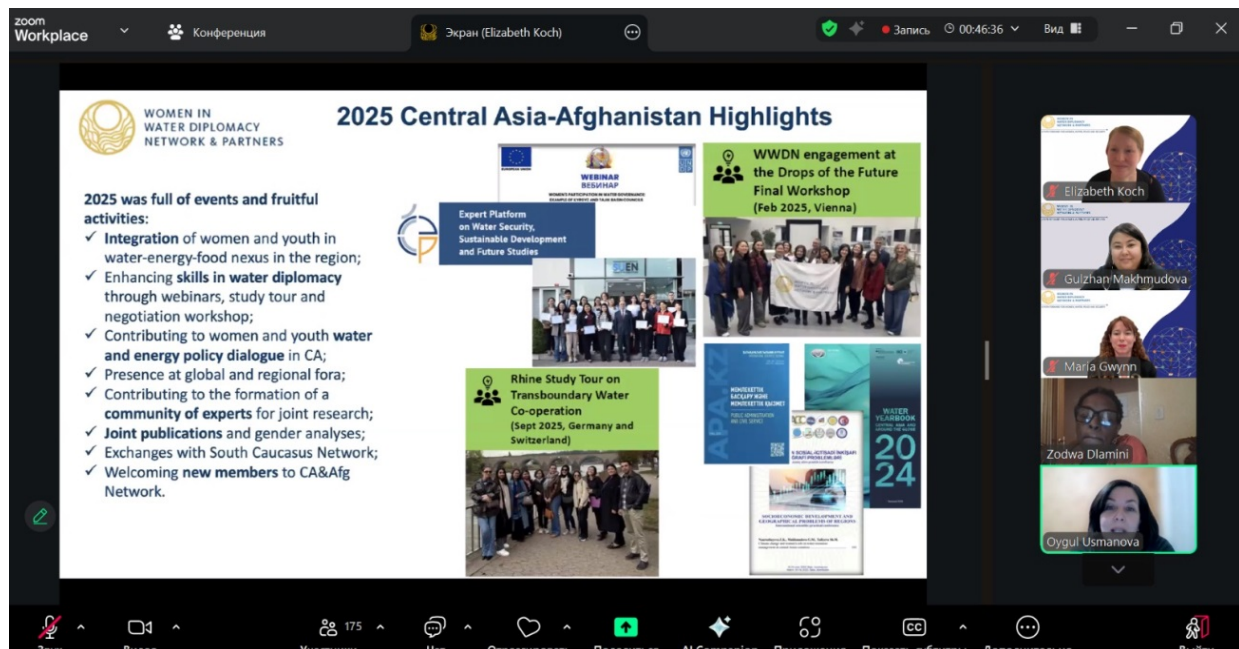
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## Women in Water Diplomacy Network Reflects on the Year

On 3 December 2025, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network (WWDN) held its annual online session, “Year-in-Review 2025,” bringing together over 150 members and partners from around the world, including representatives of expert communities, diplomatic bodies, international organizations, and regional initiatives. The event, organized as an open global meeting, provided an opportunity to review the Network’s activities in 2025, discuss the achievements of its regional chapters, and outline key priorities for 2026.

WWDN is an international community of practice comprised of women water diplomats, decision-makers, and experts representing a wealth of collective experience and expertise with focus on shared waters in water insecure and conflict sensitive regions of the world. Since its founding in the Nile Basin in 2017, the Network has evolved into a global community that now includes Central Asia and Afghanistan, Southern Africa, the South Caucasus, North and South America, and other regions.

Speaking on behalf of the Central Asia and Afghanistan chapter, Oygul Usmanova, SIC ICWC highlighted the chapter’s key activities in 2025 and the support that SIC ICWC provides to the Network’s work.



In conclusion, the new areas of work for the WWDN made possible through dedicated partner support were presented. These include preparations for active participation in the 2026 UN Water Conference, with events planned

in Senegal and UAE, as well as the launch of a global webinar series in 2026 supported by the GIZ Global Water Security program.

## **5th Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Mutually Beneficial Water and Energy Mechanism**

On 4 December, the 5th meeting of the Regional Working Group on the Development of a Mutually Beneficial Water and Energy Mechanism in Central Asia was held in Tashkent. The meeting was organized under the Green Central Asia initiative and the IKI project “Regional Mechanisms for a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Transformation of Energy-Water-Land Nexus in Central Asia” implemented by OECD, SIC ICWC, and UNECE, with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Working Group aims to support dialogue among the Central Asian countries on opportunities for enhanced cooperation in effective and sustainable water and energy management.

The 5th meeting focused on reviewing existing models for water and energy coordination and assessing their potential to support practical decision-making. The event brought together representatives of Foreign Ministries and relevant agencies of Central Asian countries, EC IFAS, SIC ICWC, as well as international and regional partners including GIZ, UNECE, World Bank, ADB, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), GFZ, PIK and others.

The key addressed topics included:

- Country and regional organizations’ needs for models and tools (“needs–models” matrix);
- Capabilities of existing models and tools to respond to these needs.

Delegation of SIC ICWC —comprising D. Ziganshina, A. Sorokin, L. Sychugova, and A. Galustyan—took part in the meeting.

SIC ICWC Director D. Ziganshina moderated key technical sessions on the use of modelling tools in support of decision-making on water and energy, the integration of climate into water–energy–economic modelling, and the development of sustainable regional energy systems. In her opening remarks, she emphasized the importance of aligning country requests with the capabilities of available analytical models/tools, as well as strengthening regional dialogue through enhanced transparency, data sharing, and common approaches.



A. Sorokin, SIC ICWC leading expert, contributed to two sessions. At the session “Models’ contribution to water and energy”, he presented HPm-GAMS, CHPm, and WAm models designed to evaluate the benefits of regional water–energy cooperation. He demonstrated how these models can be used to analyze scenarios of flow, water consumption, and energy production, and outlined data requirements, outputs, limitations, and directions for further adaptation. The presented materials are based on the research conducted by SIC ICWC and national experts within the IKI project.

During the session “Studying integrated hydroeconomic modelling” Mr. Sorokin presented the Em model (IKI project), which assesses the economic effects of management decisions in the water–energy sectors. The model compares economic effects of various water-use options, takes climate factors into account, and supports cross-sectoral planning. His report included examples of integrating the Em model with climate and hydrological models developed by international partners, expanding potential of the former for regional analysis.

Participants were also introduced to: the World Bank’s integrated WEAP–LEAP model for water–energy scenario assessment and decision support; CDC “Energy” tools for analyzing energy regimes and optimizing resource use; the MODSNOW (GFZ) model for daily snow cover monitoring and river flow forecasting; the SWIM (PIK) model for short-term forecasting of water flow and volume; modelling approaches for sustainable energy system development presented by ADB, GIZ, and UNECE.

In conclusion, participants agreed on next areas of activity of the Working Group, including the agenda for the 6th meeting, which is scheduled to take place in May 2026 in Dushanbe.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Pan-Asia Training on International Water Law**

From 8 to 11 December, Bangkok (Thailand) hosted the first Pan-Asian Training on International Water Law (IWL), a landmark event that brought together more than 100 leading experts, government officials, and representatives of the scientific community from over 20 Asian countries. Organized by the UN Water Convention Secretariat in partnership with a consortium of organizations—including Northumbria University, UNU-CRIS, IUCN, and GWP—and supported by the governments of Australia, Finland, Germany ([IKI-Nexus project](#)), and the Netherlands, the training provided a platform for dialogue on the future of transboundary water management in Asia.

Given that 25 out of 30 countries in the region share transboundary rivers, lakes, and aquifers, and that existing agreements remain insufficient in many basins, the training aimed to strengthen capacity, share advanced practices, and identify practical solutions for the effective implementation of international water law principles.

The program combined theory and practice and was structured around four key thematic areas:

- Legal frameworks and global water conventions.
- Principles and procedures: In-depth analysis of equitable and reasonable use, prevention of harm, cooperation, data exchange, and dispute resolution.
- Climate resilience and investment: Discussion of mechanisms for mobilizing green financing to adapt water management to climate change.
- Inclusive governance: The role of public participation, gender equality, youth, and access to information in water diplomacy.



SIC ICWC played an active role in delivering the training. Director of SIC ICWC, Dinara Ziganshina, served as one of the lead lecturers and facilitators, sharing Central Asia’s experience and the work of the Implementation Committee under the UN Water Convention. Her contributions covered several key sessions:

- international Water Law trends in Central Asia: On the first day, SIC ICWC presented an overview of regional practices and emerging trends of international water law in Asian subregions.
- Global water conventions: As the Chair of the Implementation Committee, Dr. Ziganshina highlighted the practical value of global water conventions, explaining the role, functions, and consultative procedure of the Committee.
- Procedural norms and infrastructure: As part of the session on procedural norms of International Water Law, SIC ICWC presented the report “Transboundary Water Infrastructure for Trust and Stability,” showcasing joint monitoring of gauging stations by Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as a new agreement between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on access to waterworks facilities.
- Inclusive water governance: On the final day, SIC ICWC moderated the session “Gender, public participation, youth, and dissemination of information in international water law,” coordinating a discussion on the involvement of various groups of population in decision-making processes. In particular, participants shared experiences in: gender equality initia-

tives and women's leadership in transboundary water management; youth engagement in transboundary dialogues and monitoring; local and community-based mechanisms for cross-border cooperation; access to information and participation in environmental impact assessments for major water management and hydropower projects.

Dr. Ziganshina also facilitated group negotiation exercises, enabling participants to practice their skills in drafting and negotiating transboundary agreements.

The first Pan-Asia Training on International Water Law laid a solid foundation for building a community of practitioners, strengthening trust, and promoting concrete steps toward implementation of international water law across Asia. It marked an important milestone in advancing SDG 6.5.2 and supporting a climate-resilient future for transboundary water of the continent. Participants emphasized the substantial practical relevance of the expert-to-expert knowledge exchange model, the comprehensive nature of the regional case studies presented, and the unique opportunity it provided for direct dialogue among Asian sub-regions.

## **Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Water Quality and the 8th Meeting of the Uzbek-Kazakh Working Group on Environmental Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River Basin**

On 10–11 December, Astana hosted a meeting of the Regional Working Group on Water Quality (RWG-WQ) and the 8th meeting of the Uzbek-Kazakh Working Group on Environmental Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River Basin.

Since 2019, RWG-WQ has been supported by the Blue Peace Central Asia Initiative (BPCA) funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The new phase of the BPCA project (2025–2029), implemented by IWMI and IUCN in partnership with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), aims to strengthen trust and cooperation among countries in the region.



Based on three key pillars, such as water diplomacy, innovative projects on small transboundary watercourses, and capacity building, BPCA promotes regional dialogue on joint water management, paying particular attention to transboundary water quality.

The first component, 'Water Diplomacy', aims to enhance transboundary water management in Central Asia through evidence-based policies and dialogue.

The meetings brought together representatives of authorized bodies responsible for environmental protection, water management and hydrometeorological services from Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), as well as representatives of universities (CoP4WASH), international partners and development organizations (UNECE, GIZ and FAO), and water quality and water diplomacy experts from the Blue Peace Central Asia project (IWMI, IUCN and CAREC).

The meeting aimed to discuss further development and capacity building of RWG-WQ to ensure alignment with regional interests and the priorities of the BPCA project. In this context, the strategic vision and action plan of RWG-WQ for 2026–2029 were discussed.

Participants discussed updates on water quality in the countries, ongoing projects and joint surface water monitoring initiatives, as well as progress in cross-border cooperation.

Mrs. Zulfiya Yarullina made a presentation on “Development of recommendations for updated regulations on classification and protection of surface water bodies in the Republic of Uzbekistan”, in which she shared the country's experience in updating and modernizing quality standards for water bodies.

As part of the meeting, a strategic vision for RWG was presented to international experts. This vision highlighted three thematic areas: methodology and monitoring of water quality; technologies and approaches that reduce pressure on water resources; and joint monitoring of surface water and groundwater, including 2026–2029 action plan.

Following the discussion, the first two points were adopted as a basis.



Experts also presented information on investments in municipal systems in Central Asian countries, a regional groundwater initiative and a protocol on water and health. Currently, two countries are parties to the protocol - Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The projects addressing agrochemical pollution were also presented.

In line with the agenda of the 8th meeting of the Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan Working Group on Environmental Protection and Water Quality of the Syr Darya River Basin (11 December), the parties exchanged on progress of the work plan adopted at the 7th meeting.

The discussions covered the assessment of joint quarterly water sampling conducted at four points along the Syr Darya River, as well as the inventory of sources of pollution of water bodies, including the Arys River and Toksansay collector in Kazakhstan, and Salar Canal and VZhD collector in Uzbekistan.

The reports highlighted that, alongside municipal and industrial wastewater, collector-drainage runoff continues to pose a significant challenge. Consequently, it was proposed that the study of the condition and management of collector-drainage systems be included in the work plan for 2026.

Overall, nine actions were fully completed out of 11 action points set for 2025, while the remaining two actions have been incorporated into the 2026 work plan with agreed deadlines.

It is also noteworthy that representatives of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and, for the first time, experts from Turkmenistan participated in the meeting as observers.

The session concluded with the adoption of a draft protocol and the 2026 work plan of the Uzbek-Kazakh Working Group on Environmental Protection and Water Quality of the Syr Darya River Basin.

## Project Activities

### Project “Facilitating Region-Specific Approaches to Addressing Climate and Environment-Related Risks for Socio-Economic Stability in Central Asia”

#### Meetings with Communities to Identify Climate Risks in the Fergana Valley

As part of the initiative, project grantees held sessions with local communities, with the technical support and participation of SIC ICWC experts.

The objective was to identify climate risks in the Fergana Valley and search for nature-based solutions.

The sessions took place in:

Karasuu and Aravan districts of Osh province and Suzak districts of Dzhahalal-Abad province, Kyrgyz Republic on 5 to 7 November;

Pakhtaabad district of Andizhan province and Fergana district of Fergana province, Republic of Uzbekistan on 8 to 9 November;





Dzabbar Rasulov, Kanibadam and Asht districts of Sogd province, Republic of Tajikistan on 11 to 13 November.



Representatives of local communities, activists, and officials from local and district authorities took an active part in the sessions. SIC ICWC was represented by Sherzod Muminov, Deputy Director and Project Lead, and Boris Gojenko, Project Manager. National coordinators and environmental and gender project experts also took part in the sessions in each country.

To collect and analyze community perspectives, adapted UNEP tools were used, including problem and solution trees, prioritization matrix and others. These helped to accurately identify community needs and properly assess the risks and opportunities associated with proposed solutions.

Based on the results of the sessions, grantees in each country began drafting subprojects for further review and potential implementation.

## First Meeting of the Regional Network

On 18–19 December 2025, the first meeting of the regional network in Central Asia was held in the city of Fergana.

The aim is to promote exchange of experience, mutual learning, and joint planning in the project’s priority areas. It also seeks to develop a shared vision for a community of practitioners and to lay the foundation for its future work, drawing on the knowledge, expectations, and commitments of the project’s grant recipient organizations. The event brought together local authorities and other stakeholders to strengthen accountability and commitment, while fostering open dialogue.



The meeting brought together representatives of government bodies, environmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, the expert community, and EU–UNEP project grantees from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

The event opened with remarks from representatives of the Fergana Provincial Administration and relevant agencies, who emphasized their commitment to supporting climate adaptation as a pathway to socio-economic stability. Sherzod Muminov, Deputy Director of SIC ICWC and Project Manager, highlighted the particular importance of regional cooperation as part of the project.

B. Gojenko and A. Dolidudko also participated on behalf of SIC ICWC.



Project grantees presented and discussed preliminary results from sessions with local communities, including identified climate risks and proposed sub-projects. In addition to key areas of activity, participants identified training priorities and thematic interests for each grantee organization.

At the conclusion, participants underscored the high relevance of the proposed sub-projects and their contribution to enhancing climate resilience, reducing conflict potential, and strengthening socio-economic stability in the region. The official program was followed by a welcome reception, providing an opportunity for informal exchange and further strengthening of partnership ties.

## “Water-Energy Nexus Systems Modeling” Project

### Workshop “Introduction to the LEAP model for Central Asia and Integration of LEAP-WEAP tools”

On 6 November 2025, a one-day workshop was held at the SIC ICWC Training Center. This event was organized jointly with the World Bank Group and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) as part of the “Water-Energy Nexus Systems Modeling” Project.

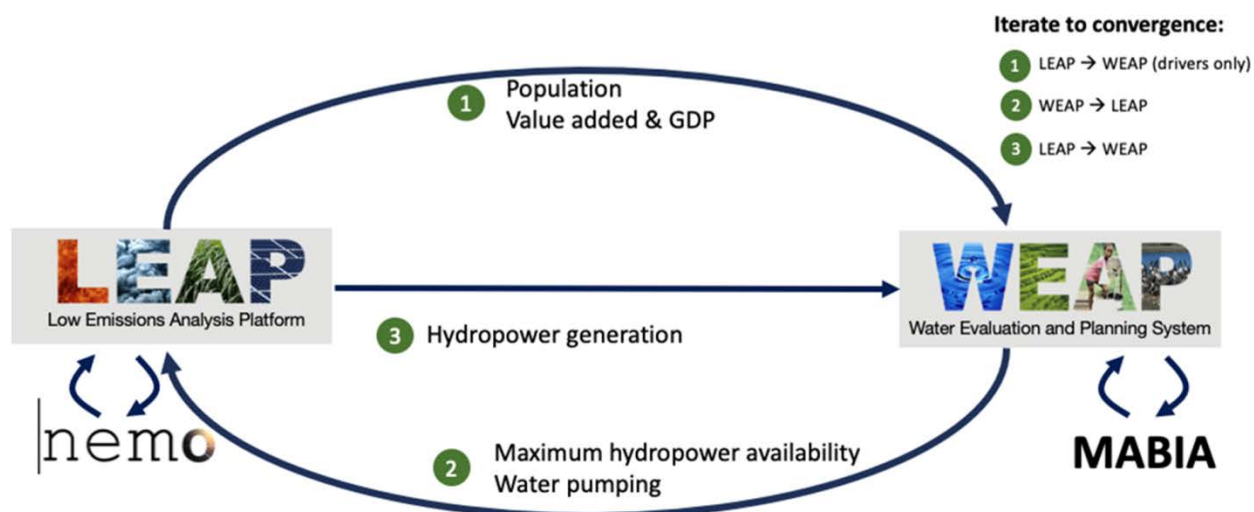
This workshop marked the continuation of the project’s second phase, focusing on the energy component. The main objective was to introduce participants to the LEAP model for Central Asia and to demonstrate the integration of LEAP and WEAP tools for analyzing interlinkages between water and energy systems.



During the workshop, participants were presented the SEI’s model for Central Asia, which covers all five countries of the region and represents the full spectrum of energy generation and consumption—from national energy demand to cross-border electricity flows. The model spans the period 2010–2050, includes hourly simulations of electricity processes, and analyzes greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O). Также внимание было уделено демонстрации взаимодействия между двумя моделями LEAP-WEAP:

A special focus was given to demonstrating the interaction between the LEAP and WEAP models:

- WEAP assesses the availability of water resources for hydropower and sets priorities for their use.
- The output data are transmitted to LEAP, which calculates electricity generation and balances supply and demand.
- The output from LEAP is integrated in the WEAP for more precise definition of scenarios.



Such an approach supports the development of sustainable energy scenarios that take into account limited water resources—an essential consideration for Central Asia.

The workshop represented an important step in deepening understanding of the interconnections between water and energy. Participants were introduced to the theoretical foundations of working with the LEAP tool and the SEI Central Asia model, and gained insights into the fundamental principles of LEAP–WEAP integration.

## In-Person Training as Part of the Project

On 17–21 November 2025, an in-person training was held at the SIC ICWC Training Center. The training was organized in cooperation with the World Bank Group. Experts from SIC ICWC, members of Technical Group 2, as well as international experts Amjad Muhammad Khan (World Bank) and Guillaume Bouchard from the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) participated in the training.



This training built on previous sessions and focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the LEAP (Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning) model for members of Technical Group 2. The main objectives included:

- Mastering the SEI Central Asia LEAP model, including cost optimization and cost-benefit analysis for energy planning.
- Studying the integration of the LEAP and WEAP models within the “Water–Energy Nexus Systems for Central Asian Countries” framework to assess cross-sector interactions.
- Identifying key regional challenges and opportunities that require cross-sectoral or integrated analysis.
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating Water–Energy–Food Nexus policy scenarios.

The program combined lectures and practical sessions, enabling participants to explore model integration processes, scenario building and implementation in LEAP, and the basic principles governing the model's functionality. By the end of the training, participants had gained hands-on experience in data input and analysis, developed their own scenarios, and received methodological materials and recommendations for applying the model to energy sector analysis and scenario assessment.



The training not only expanded participants' theoretical knowledge but also strengthened their practical skills, forming an important foundation for continued work in energy system modeling.

During the concluding discussion, participants agreed on the next stages of work within the “Water–Energy Nexus Systems Modelling” project. The session also fostered enhanced cooperation among experts from various organizations and sectors, which is expected to positively support the project's further development.



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