



# 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 US\$ 4.4 billion, include flood management, irrigation and drainage, clean water supply, sanitation, hydropower, institutional reforms, and knowledge and capacity building support.

### Projects in Central Asia in 2021

ADB has supported the [Central Asia Regional Economic \(CAREC\) Program](#) for regional cooperation and integration. A partnership of 11 countries supported by six multilateral institutions<sup>93</sup> promotes development through cooperation, leading to accelerated growth and poverty reduction. In 2017, CAREC introduced agriculture and water as a key pillar under the CAREC 2030 strategy. In 2020, ADB approved a technical assistance (TA) to support the development of the CAREC water pillar, emphasizing economic aspects and sustainable financing of water resources management. The TA prepared a scoping study 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.

ADB investments in 2021 were still impacted by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which restricted mobility and travel. Investment approvals in 2021 include a US\$ 30 million grant for Tajikistan, the [Climate- and Disaster-Resilient Irrigation and Drainage Modernization in the Vakhsh River Basin](#) project. The project aims to increase climate and disaster resilience, water productivity, and income of farmers in selected areas of the Yovon irrigation and drainage system. It has a high 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, placing **Tajikistan** as a leading gender champion. 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.

For the **Kyrgyz Republic**, a US\$ 23.5 million loan and US\$ 11.5 million grant for the Landslide Risk Management Sector Project were approved. This is ADB'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.

A wind power plant project in Zerafshan in **Uzbekistan** is at the approval stage. Before approval and implementation, a study and assessment of socio-environmental impacts from the project have been conducted to inform decision makers.

Efforts continue to improve water supply and sanitation (WSS) infrastructure and services. In Georgia, the Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Development Program comprising two loans was approved by ADB Board in 2021: the policy-based loan (PBL) of €115.31 million (US\$ 130 million equivalent) and a project loan of €17.74 million (US\$ 20 million equivalent). The program was designed to improve water supply and sanitation (WSS) services delivery through upstream policy and institutional reforms and downstream strengthening of United Water Supply Company of Georgia (UWSCG), the sole state-owned enterprise (SOE) remaining in the country's WSS sector. PBL supports establishment of comprehensive, high-impact sector and SOE reform measures, including various policy actions, while the project loan complements the policy actions by (i) strengthening the operation and maintenance capacity of UWSCG. The two PBL tranches (€70.96 million and €44.35 million) were released in December 2021, respectively. All trench policy conditions were completed by the government less than one year after the loan became effective. The timely achievement of two trench conditions reflects good implementation progress and the government's strong commitment to the proposed reforms. The desired policy impact and outcomes under the program will be accomplished as planned. The project team is closely monitoring the policy action implementation progress, results and impacts.

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

<sup>93</sup> 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.

The United Arab Emirates hosted the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors by electronic means on October 26-28. With the theme "Investing Today, Transforming Tomorrow," the Meeting enabled AIIB to engage via webinars with a wide range of stakeholders in the Middle East and beyond, exchanging ideas and creating opportunities in line with AIIB's mission to finance the Infrastructure for Tomorrow (i4t).

Many believe that multilateral financial institutions such as the AIIB play a vital role in developing better environmental, social and governance standards. This was a topic the AIIB planned to discuss at the annual meeting. Meanwhile, after three years of use, the bank has amended its Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), with a new version having gone into effect in October. Recent investigations and studies, however, have called into question the impact of the AIIB's investments and whether they are in line with its core values. They believe that AIIB's new green-lighted ESF measures would reduce **transparency and accountability** since the framework has many



exemptions where the list of documents and time bound requirements are not applied. Further, ESF provisions allow the AIIB to delegate disclosure responsibility to its clients in some circumstances.

The Bank also **announced** that it will align its operations with the goals of the Paris Agreement by July 1, 2023. The Bank currently estimates its cumulative climate finance approvals to be US\$ 50 billion by 2030. This amount would represent a fourfold increase in annual climate finance commitments.

### Projects in Central Asia in 2021

AIIB has approved a US\$100-million loan to ACWA Power Syrdarya LLC to support the construction of the Syrdarya 1,500 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbines (CCGT) Power Project in the Republic of Uzbekistan. It has also approved a loan to **Medium-size Cities Integrated Urban Development Project** to address the challenges of rapid urbanization of secondary cities.

Source: [www.aiib.org/en/index.html](http://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 2021

In **Kazakhstan**, EBRD focuses on balancing the role of state and market, development of local capital markets, green economy transition, and sustainable energy. To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 296 **projects** in Kazakhstan amount to €9,145 million. Current portfolio of projects is €2,815 million.

In 2021, EBRD and the Government of Kazakhstan have agreed a five-year Enhanced Partnership Framework Arrangement (EPFA) to boost the resilience, modernization, digitalization and regional integration of the national economy, with a view to speeding its recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

A senior loan of up to US\$ 44.83 million was provided under **KAZREF II – Borey Wind** to finance the development, construction, and operation of a wind power



plant in central Kazakhstan, with a total installed capacity of 100 MW. The EBRD loan of US\$ 80 million will help the Atyrau oil refinery, Kazakhstan's leading vertically integrated oil and gas company, **modernize** industrial wastewater treatment facilities, and overhaul 860 hectares of evaporation ponds. Once implemented, the project will increase water reuse and reduce the withdrawal of freshwater from the Ural River.

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 207 **projects** in the Kyrgyz Republic amount to €822 million. Current portfolio of projects is €165 million.

€4.8 million financing package includes a loan from the EBRD and a grant support by European Union and Japan under the latest **water-supply improvement**

project, which will improve the water infrastructure of the Nookat city; specialised vehicles and maintenance equipment worth over €2.4 million delivered to six municipalities to improve [water and wastewater services](#).

In **Tajikistan**, EBRD focuses on all sectors, including energy, infrastructure, financial sector, corporate sector, and SMEs. To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 149 [projects](#) in Tajikistan amount to €857 million. Current portfolio of projects is €526 million.

EBRD has organized a financing package of US\$ 4 million to Tajikistan's largest private lender Bank Eshkata under its Green Economy Financing Facility (GEFF) to support green financing for households and small private-sector companies investing in green technology solutions. A sovereign loan of up to €1.8 million to the Republic of Tajikistan to be on-lent to the State Unitary Enterprise "Khojagii Manziliyu Kommunalii of Fayzobod Region", which is responsible for the provision of [water supply and solid waste services](#) in the city of Fayzobod, the capital of the Region. €35 million are allocated for the [modernization of the power distribution network](#) in the Khatlon region of the country and will also help introducing billing and metering infrastructure.

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 88 [projects](#) in Turkmenistan amount to €323 million. Current portfolio of projects is €49 million.

The loans allocated to the agro-industry included: US\$ 2.5 million to the country's leading juice and dairy products producer [Parahat](#) to acquire specialized equipment for packaging fruit, vegetable purees and concentrates, as well as a new PET packaging line to bottle soft drinks; up to US\$ 3 million to ES Biyat, to finance a new production line, which will help process spent grain into animal/fish feed, help diversify product range and improve distribution.

In **Uzbekistan**, the EBRD's Country Strategy for 2018-2023 identifies: enhancement of competitiveness by strengthening the role of the private sector's role in the economy; promotion of green energy and resource solutions across sectors; support of increased regional and international cooperation and integration. To date, the cumulative EBRD investments in 110 [projects](#) in Uzbekistan amount to €3,092 million. Current portfolio of projects is €1,766 million.

The Bank disbursed up to €125 million for modernization of water and wastewater infrastructure in Khorezm province, city of Tashkent, and Namangan province; signed about €100 million for modernization of solid waste infrastructure in Karakalpastan and Khorezm province; approved up to US\$70 million to FE [Indorama Agro LLC](#), an established cotton industry player, for introduction of good agronomic and crop management practices.

In 2021, Samarkand became the first city in Uzbekistan to boost its urban sustainability planning by joining the EBRD's €3-billion flagship programme, [EBRD Green Cities](#).

Source: [www.ebrd.com](http://www.ebrd.com)

## 8.4. European Union



On 17 June 2019, the Council adopted a new [EU Strategy on Central Asia](#). The new-generation bilateral Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCAs) is a cornerstone of EU engagement.

In 2021, the EU and the five Central Asian states celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations. EU engagement with the region has significantly expanded since that moment.

EU programming in Central Asia for the period 2021-2027 provides funding for a Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP). As **Kazakhstan** is an Upper Middle-Income country, this MIP is limited to a cooperation facility (€16 million) focusing on two priority areas: Sustainable Economic Growth and Rule of Law. As to the **Kyrgyz Republic**, the new MIP (with allocation of €62 million for the initial period) is expected to respond to the Kyrgyz National Development Strategy 2040 (NDS), adopted in November 2018. MIP for **Tajikistan** is expected to run in parallel with the Tajik National Development Strategy 2016-2030, which has the over-arching goal of improving living standards through sustainable economic development (€91 million for the initial period). **Turkmenistan** will benefit from a cooperation facility (€18 million), focusing on green aspects of the economy and improving

the business climate, with an emphasis on agriculture/rural development and support to trade development. The EU's priority areas for cooperation with **Uzbekistan** will be support to democratic governance and digital transformation; inclusive, digital, and green growth; and the development of a smart and eco-friendly agro-food sector (€83 million for 2021-2024 (initial stage)).

### 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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 2021

The 10<sup>th</sup> WGECC meeting was held on October 4-5. The discussion at the first gathering after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic was built around the

following four items: biological diversity, climate change, decoupling economic growth from the increase of pollution, and toolbox for sustainable recovery. EU-CA WGECC Coordination Committee had its second (February 10) and third (July 22) meetings in 2021.

The following online trainings and webinars were organized: (1) EU-CA Academic School on Environmental Economics for university teachers of Central Asia (April 12-30); (2) WECOOP-IGTIPC Webinar: Best Available Techniques (BAT), new Environmental Code of Kazakhstan and the EU experience (August 2-October 29); (4) WECOOP-IWAC workshop: Exchange of experience in hydrometeorological services (November 10-11); (5) WECOOP basic training: Preparation of the investment projects (November 29-December 9); (6) WECOOP webinar on newly developed regulations of Turkmenistan on air quality management and EIA (December 3).

In total, 37 journalists took part in the contest “Restoring Biodiversity – our shared responsibility”. 6 winners were announced during an online Award Ceremony in July.

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

#### Green Central Asia: Transboundary Dialogue on climate, environment and security in Central Asia and Afghanistan

Since over a decade, Germany is actively engaged in supporting regional cooperation in Central Asia. The Berlin Process mainly focused on transboundary water management among the five Central Asian countries. Improving access to food security, water availability, a healthy habitat for humans, flora and fauna is only possible with enhanced stability in the region and mitigated impact of climate change on glaciers and natural resources such as water, land, and soil.

In the context of German engagement on climate change and security within the UN and support to the new EU-Central Asia Strategy of June 2019, the German Foreign Office launched the Initiative ‘Green Central Asia’ – Enhancing environment, climate and water resilience’ with a ministerial conference in Berlin. The existing Berlin Process was enlarged by



additional aspects of transboundary cooperation concerning climate, environment and security.

To support the political dialogue a regional working group was established and developed a Regional Action Plan under the [Green Central Asia Initiative](#), which was approved by all five Central Asian countries in November. Four priorities were defined for joint action: climate sensitive water and land management, cooperation on international environment instruments and waste management with a focus on e-waste.

Scientific support and capacity building measures were provided by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam – German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), the Martin Luther University Halle Wittenberg and the German-Kazakhstan University (DKU).

**Other Regional Programs and Projects.** Continued (1) Project “[Technology-based climate change adaptation in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan](#)” (2019-2022/ BMZ, DKT), which aims to assist the responsible authorities in the countries to improve the plans for climate adaptation in rural regions with the aid of modern information technology and geodata management;

(2) Project "Ecologically oriented regional development in the Aral Sea region" (2020-2024/ BMZ), to help the governments of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to improve cross-border, ecologically sustainable and economic development of the Aral Sea region; (3) Project "Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia" (2021-2024/BMZ/ CA countries). The objective is better incorporating integrative land use approaches at national and regional levels in Central Asia.

### National Projects on Water, Environment, and Development

A number of projects continued its activity in 2021: (1) "Policy Advice for Climate-Resilient Economic Development" (2019-2022/BMU), implemented in Kazakhstan along with Viet Nam and Georgia; (2) "Rural development in Southern Kyrgyzstan" under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (2018-

2023/BMZ). The Project aims to increase income opportunities in agriculture and tourism in the Jalal-Abad region and build capabilities of local governments to create better social and economic conditions; (3) Biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction through community-based management of walnut forests and pastures" (2018-2023/BMZ). The project is implemented in Bazar-Korgon and Aksy districts of the Jalal-Abad region to increase incomes of woodland-dependent communities and improve their adaptation to climate change by conserving biodiversity; (4) "Biodiversity and ecosystem services in agrarian landscapes" (2016-2022, BMU). Objective of this global project is to strengthen individual and institutional capacities and boost knowledge on increasing biodiversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services in agrarian landscapes.

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

## 8.6. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development



The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a multidisciplinary intergovernmental organization comprising 38 member countries that 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.

OECD is working to help developed and developing countries meet the water challenge, with focus on economic and financial dimensions of water management and improving governance. In addition to analytical work, OECD works with selected regions and countries to facilitate the reform of water policies. 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 was a key partner with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asia-Pacific Water Forum for the 2020 edition of the [Asian Water Development Outlook](#).

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 mana-

gement 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.

### OECD work in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in 2021

In Central Asia, the OECD works with partner countries through its [GREEN Action Task Force](#). The GREEN Action Task Force annual meeting in 2021 was held in virtual form on [12-13 October 2021](#) with an agenda that reviewed progress with implementation of the programme of work for 2021-2022 and a substantive focus on the environmental aspects of the policy responses to the COVID-19 outbreak in EECCA, mineral resources and the development of water policy outlooks.

The OECD assists the countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (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 the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (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).

In Central Asia, recent work has included analysis of energy, water and food security as part of a new prog-

ramme of work on "nexus". This work included a high-level policy dialogue in [Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 15 October 2021](#) where Central Asian officials met to discuss the benefits of cooperation to promote resource security.

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.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

### OSCE Activities in 2021

**The OSCE Program Office in Dushanbe (POiD)** supported IFAS with technical equipment to strengthen regional co-operation on science and practice. The Office facilitated IFAS in organizing the Regional Conference for the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum held in Dushanbe (October 19-20), and organized a Gender and Water side event at the conference for informing and experience sharing, with contribution from the OCEEA. Furthermore, the Office organized the Science for Diplomacy workshop targeting young professionals from the region to facilitate long-term water related science networks. The Office, in cooperation with the Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation (ALRI), organized a review of the Water Code and the development of two byelaws, which will strengthen the institutional framework and spell out responsibilities of key stakeholders. The Office in co-operation with ALRI also contributed to knowledge creation in the irrigation sector by conducting a survey on gender and water. Further building on 2020 achievements of the development of a byelaw on defining water management boundaries, the Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources organized a pilot to operationalize the methodology of setting basin boundaries considering IWRM principles in the Kofarnihon basin. POiD also supported the implementation of the National Water Strategy 2030 through an intervention on decentralized energy security in remote areas.

**The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz)** continued its collaboration with the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environmental Protection in the monitoring of pollution in the Syr Darya River Basin and in the assessment of the transboundary impact of toxic wastes. With the aim to support the government of Uzbekistan in the implementation of efficient Disaster Risk Reduction mechanisms and with adequate safety precautions, the composition of various pollutants in water resources was monitored (settlements of Vuadil, Madaniyat and Baymak along the Shakhimardan, Mayluu-Suu, and Sumsar Rivers). PCUz continued its support to ICWC by publishing 120 copies of the 2020 Water Yearbook "Central Asia and Around the Globe", drafted and compiled by SIC ICWC.

**The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat (CiA)**, in August 2021, organized a seminar "International Experience in the Implementation of Digital Technologies in Water Industry". The event was tailored based on the interests and priorities of the national stakeholders. The seminar attracted the main national actors of water sector of Turkmenistan such as the State Committee on Water Economy, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna, as well as representatives of international organizations and SIC ICSD. International experts from Switzerland (Hydrosolutions GmbH) and Morocco (ICARDA) presented the international perspective and advanced experience in implementation of innovative solutions and digital technologies for sustainable water management, with a particular focus on water availability and supply, irrigation and water conservation. The outcome document of the event included recommendations for the national beneficiaries on the implementation and adaptation of advanced water technologies given the country context.

**The OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan (POiN)** in co-operation with the OSCE Program Office in Bishkek facilitated the activities of the Chu-Talas Water Commission by carrying out surface water samples collection and analysis of water quality as well as conducting a study on needs assessment for the conservation of wetlands in the Chu River Basin. POiN supported a tour for young water specialists to major hydraulic structures in Kazakhstan's southern regions, where participants learned about the water facilities' technical characteristics, purpose of use and operational safety aspects. POiN also contributed to the national discussion and review of the main provisions of the draft concept paper of the new Water Code. As part of its long-standing efforts to engage youth and promote environmental leadership, the POiN in partnership with DKU supported a training seminar for young civil servants, students and representatives of government organizations from Central Asia and Afghanistan. The training focused on water governance and climate security in Central Asia, as well as risks countries in the region may face due to climate change impacts on water resources.

**The OSCE Programme office in Bishkek (POiB)** continued its support to the water resources management in Kyrgyzstan by supporting the activities of the Chu-Talas Water Commission to carry out surface water sampling collection and analysis of water quality in the trans-

boundary 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 Almaty in November 2021.

The POiB and the Aarhus Center in Cholpon-Ata supported the organization of a clean-up activity of the Issyk-Kul Lake coastal area, contributing to the global environmental campaign "Cleaning the Planet from Garbage". The event was conducted in Cholpon-Ata city with participation of 16 professional divers and more than 70 activists, local residents, representatives of the local authorities, municipal entities, environmental services, as well as public organizations of Cholpon-Ata town. More than 1 ton of solid waste, plastic, fishing nets and other litter were extracted from the lake and shoreline by divers and participants. The clean-up campaigns in Issyk-Kul region are conducted annually since 2018 to raise awareness on waste management and preservation of Issyk-Kul Lake.

**The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)** continued its contribution to the organization of the "Water Day" of the 12<sup>th</sup> Central Asia Leadership Programme organized by CAREC. During the event, OSCE project staff contributed to the sessions: "Water Diplomacy: Regional Cooperation on Water Management" and "The Impor-

tant Role of Gender Mainstreaming in Water Governance", including the launch of the e-learning course "Gender Mainstreaming in Water Governance".

As part of the project "Women, Water Management and Conflict Prevention – phase II", the OCEEA also launched the Mentoring and Career Development Programme for Women Water Professionals in Central Asia and Afghanistan: the Programme is implemented in partnership with CAREC and SIWI. Each month, 18 women from Central Asia and Afghanistan meet online with experts and mentors to discuss challenges women face in the water sector and take part in capacity building activities. The Programme will be further represented in the 2022 Stockholm World Water Week as part of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Forum organized in partnership with SIWI. Among other activities, the project also involved the launch of a photo competition on "Women in Water Management", and the development of 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 (CAT4W).

The OCEEA and POiB are supporting the Government of Tajikistan in organization of the Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 in June 2022 and will contribute to the program sessions and events.

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**

Switzerland has embarked on its new **Cooperation Programme for Central Asia (2022-2025)**, which continues to have a strong focus on water, infrastructure and climate change. The Programme is set up in a way to encompass regional efforts to address water and climate change, along with national portfolios in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The overall goal of the regional water portfolio is to see *Central Asian states 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 new Swiss programme will build on past interventions in the region to support sustainable and equitable management of (sub-)river basins at regional and transboundary levels. The programme will work coherently at local, national and regional levels through multi-track diplomacy (including engagement with Central Asian youth) to encourage decision-makers to pursue necessary reforms. Improvement of water governance at the

sub-basin level will provide the building blocks to achieve more robust IWRM in each country and across borders and to improve access to safely managed drinking water. Finally, the programme will aim to increase the resilience of rural and urban communities, to enhance their ability to manage the impact of climate change, and to improve access to affordable and reliable public infrastructure services. The previous Cooperation Programme (2017-2021) yielded promising results, at both national and regional levels.

In the **Kyrgyz Republic**, Switzerland supports the Kyrgyz authorities in their efforts to implement their own Water Code that is based on aspects of IWRM and introduced an improved system for monitoring water flow in transboundary Chu and Talas river basins. This support also resulted in the establishment of the State Water Agency, pilot basin administrations, councils and draft basin plans. The Swiss-funded efforts have enhanced irrigation efficiency by strengthening the capacity of over 80% of all the water user associations, as well as by rehabilitating water supply and sanitation infrastructure and strengthening the drinking water service providers in targeted cities, benefiting 1.5 million people in urban settings.

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 suppor-



ted the city of Khorog to put in place the institutions, knowledge base and systems required as a precursor to the resilient implementation of infrastructure investments in Khorog as a basis for sustainable economic development. Switzerland also supports the provision of efficient weather, water and climate services for the rural population of Tajikistan, especially those highly vulnerable to climate change. With that it contributes to improved livelihoods and resilience of people through the provision of accurate/timely forecasts to improve agricultural productivity, hence guarantee food security, effectively manage irrigation water and reduce vulnerability to hazards.

In **Uzbekistan**, Switzerland supported the Ministry of Water Resources in the development of the Water Sector Development Concept 2020-2030 (Water 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. Building on Switzerland's engagement in the water sector reform in Uzbekistan, the Program promotes climate resilient integrated water resources management in the Zarafshan River Basin to enhance people's livelihoods and inform water sector reform processes and climate change policies at national and regional level.

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. Under the Blue Peace Central Asia Dialogue Platform (policy pillar) a series of webinars were conducted to foster techno-political exchange and establish a "community of practice" around the economic narrative of joint water management in the region. Knowledge products (Water Footprint and the Blue Peace Index for Syr Darya and Amu Darya) were presented during various bilateral, regional, and global

events, including the Central Asia Climate Change Conference, the Stockholm World Water Week, and the preparatory meeting for the Dakar World Water Forum. Moreover, several technical exchanges were facilitated, one of which included the Kazakh-Kyrgyz working group on water quality. Under the youth pillar of the Initiative, the CAY4W enhanced member engagement. A parallel work stream to provide support for improved water education in Central Asia is moving steadily, and a more solid network of universities that jointly drive the improvement of provision of education in multi-sectoral water issues could be instrumental. A BPCA capitalisation reviewed the past seven years of activity and provided important inputs for the design of the initiative's second phase. Switzerland will continue this diplomatic initiative and a follow-up BPCA 2.0 program is being developed and reconfirms its commitment to the work for another 10 years. The following publications were released: **Online course book** developed by Hydrosolutions as part of the **Blue Peace Youth Pillar Programme**; and, **Blue Peace Index for Syr Darya and Amu Darya** developed by the Economics Impact Unit in the frame of the BPCA initiative.

Switzerland (SECO funding) contributes to the **CAWEP Program** (see "World Bank"). Furthermore, Switzerland strengthens the glacier, snow and permafrost monitoring systems and capacities in Central Asia through its **Cryospheric Observation and Modelling for improved Adaptation in Central Asia (CROMO-ADAPT)** project. It builds on Swiss expertise in monitoring and adaptation in alpine water and disaster risk management to develop user-oriented climate information services, and supports the planning of adaptation measures to increase resilience to climate change. Finally, Switzerland also supports the **Governance of Groundwater Resources in Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA)** project, a global project with the Pre-Tashkent aquifer as one of three pilot areas, implemented by UNESCO.

*Source:* Regional Water and Climate Change Advisor for Central Asia, Embassy of Switzerland in Uzbekistan

## 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 Activities in 2021

#### Kazakhstan

Tetra Tech ES, Inc., implementer of the USAID Power Central Asia activity, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MOU) with Samruk-Energy, Kazakhstan's largest diversified energy holding company. Under the MOU, the USAID Power Central Asia activity will help Samruk-Energy develop a low carbon strategy with the overall aim to reduce their carbon footprint by

2060, in parallel with Kazakhstan's plans to reach carbon neutrality by the same year as part of the nation's updated national climate plan.

#### Kyrgyz Republic

USAID **partners** with government, civil society and the private sector to improve governance, promote economic growth and enhance the quality of health care and education. The Agency continued projects in agriculture, food security, economic growth and tra-



de: "Farmer-to-farmer" (September 2013-September 2023); and, "Agro Trade" (2020-2025).

### Tajikistan

USAID in Tajikistan (1) continues to improve the incomes of smallholder farmers, catalyze women's economic empowerment, and increase the production and consumption of nutritious foods while supporting the diversification of livelihoods for increased household and community resilience to shocks and stressors; (2) helped 741 women secure land tenure rights and increased awareness and legal literacy in land use rights and land reform for 5.5 thousand women farmers; (3) in partnership with local entrepreneurs, established 20 new agricultural businesses including cold-storage, canning, drying, juicing, and animal feed processing facilities, leveraging \$1.5 million in private sector investment and leading to 293 new part-time and seasonal jobs; (4) helps the local government deliver water services to its constituents, works with farmers to better manage irrigation water through water user associations; (5) rehabilitated 76 water systems, giving more than 242,000 people access to safe drinking water, including under the Program "Thrive Tajikistan: Partnership for socio-economic development" (2018-2023) aimed to improve the quality of life for people in 16 districts of Tajikistan.

### Uzbekistan

Since 1993, USAID has provided over US\$ 500 million in assistance to diversify the country's economy and increase regional trade, advance judicial reform, strengthen civil society, and modernize the basic educational system.

### At the regional level, USAID:

- announced on the launch of the Central Asia Investment Partnership between the United States, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to promote regional economic partnership and prosperity. The Partnership will advance private sector led projects that exemplify international standards for quality infrastructure and promote inclusive, transparent, and sustainable investments. In doing so, partners will maximize the success and positive impact of the projects and mobilize additional private investment to the region;

- started the five-year Regional Water and Vulnerable Environment Activity, worth US\$ 24.5 million, to strengthen regional capacity to manage shared water resources and mitigate environmental risks in the Syr Darya and Amu Darya River basins. The project aims to achieve the following: (1) well-trained human capital and strengthened educational institutions that address both IWRM and the water-energy-food-environment (WEFE) nexus; (2) sustainable river basin councils that promote cooperation over transboundary rivers for mutual economic benefit; (3) enhanced national and regional initiatives that address transboundary water cooperation with focus on benefit sharing;

- launched a new five-year, US\$ 39 million regional energy program – the USAID Power Central Asia Activity in Tajikistan. The program will assist the five Central Asian countries to meet their national energy priorities, reap economic benefits from cross-border energy trading, and improve energy security through greater regional connectivity.

Source: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov); <https://tj.usembassy.gov>; <https://uz.usembassy.gov/>

## 8.10. World Bank



### World Bank Activities in 2021

#### Central Asian Water and Energy Program

The Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP) continued implementation of its phase III in 2021. CAWEP is a multi-donor trust fund with a total budget of US\$ 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 US\$ 660 million worth of investments through analytical work and technical studies. The program finances three project preparation grants in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The program also informed the design of a major regional program RESILAND CA+ currently in the pipeline across four countries on landscape resilience.

Ongoing water activities focus on the following key issues: (1) improving management of sub-basins with transboundary significance; (2) modernizing irrigated agriculture to improve water productivity with a focus on increased awareness; (3) national water management by focusing on policy, advisory and technical support to benefit regional water security; (4) regional water management to strengthen the capacity of national hydrometeorological services to im-

prove national hydrometeorological information services to key sectors including water, energy, disaster risk management, and agriculture; and (5) capacity building and pilot initiatives to improve cross-country cooperation and explore innovative solutions for water-related challenges.

CAWEP provides support to the work of the IFAS Regional Working Group who are deliberating on reforms options for IFAS institutions. A hybrid format [meeting of the RWG](#) was held in October in Dushanbe with participation of the World Bank staff and consultants who are supporting this process. At this meeting the RWG agreed to an improved IFAS structure and legal framework. Following the RWG meeting, [EC-IFAS met](#) with international development partners to discuss potential support to the 4<sup>th</sup> Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4). Following this event, a Joint Statement of the EC-IFAS and International Development Partners on the Implementation of the ASBP-4 was issued. Participants agreed to strengthen donor coordination, establish a platform for dialogue, and share information on ongoing activities and plans to synergize implementation of regional projects and programs.

A diagnostic framework has been developed to assess the performance of irrigation and drainage service providers in Central Asia. The assessment will use data from a field survey implemented in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan at the level of regional and district irrigation service providers and water user associations. Additionally, a remote-sensing based assessment of irrigation performance (including productivity and efficiency) has been conducted, that combines RS imagery from multiple sources and using machine learning algorithms for drive classifications. Data from these assessments have been used to inform the design of a new EU-funded irrigation project in Tajikistan.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, a new water supply and wastewater law is being finalized by EcoAudit LLC under the World Bank-funded [Sustainable Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Development Project](#) implemented by ARIS. CAWEP engaged international experts in water law and WSS regulations to provide advisory support on the concept of the law. CAWEP is also providing expert support to revise and optimize design norms and standards for water supply and wastewater systems.

The focus of energy activities is to contribute to national and regional building blocks for energy production and trade. At the regional level, CAWEP assessed opportunities for intra- and inter-regional energy market integration and trade and the economic benefits of regional electricity trade for 2019-2030 under business-as-usual, trade and existing infrastructure, trade and CASA-1000, and trade and CASA-1000 and TUTAP scenarios. In Uzbekistan, CAWEP is supporting a feasibility study for procurement of SCADA/EMS and telecommunication upgrade that will inform the [Electricity Sector Trans-](#)

[formation and Resilient Transmission \(ESTART\) Project](#). In Tajikistan, CAWEP helped to design the Program of Financial Recovery of Barki Tojik for 2019-2025 approved by the Government in April 2019, and informed design of the Power Utility Financial Recovery Program, Sebzor Hydropower Project, the Khorog-Qozil-deh Transmission Line Project, and the Rural Electrification Project. In December, CAWEP supported the governments of the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan in organizing a workshop in Bishkek on development of renewable energy and private sector investment followed by a study tour to Uzbekistan to see the outcomes of energy sector reforms, including increased renewable energy generation and its integration into the national grid. These two events have contributed to an enhanced knowledge base for green energy development that builds on the favorable legislative framework and actively engages the private sector.

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. On March 3-4, CAKN convened a [regional virtual conference](#) to discuss challenges and opportunities faced by researchers and practitioners in Central Asia and how to stimulate knowledge sharing and cross-border partnerships on water issues. In October, CAKN was integrated under the Facilitation of the Regional Dialogue activity with a focus on institutional strengthening of [CAREC](#) for long-term sustainability and capacity building on water-energy nexus and gender mainstreaming. Technical studies of integrated landscape restoration and catchment management are ongoing in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan to inform the governments on erosion and sedimentation processes for sustainable hydropower. A [disruptive technology challenge](#) to identify cutting-edge environmental solutions to address land degradation and desertification challenges in the Aral Sea region was concluded in April. Out of 159 proposals from 28 countries, the panel of experts selected 4 proposals and 4 rising star awards in agriculture and land management, sustainable forestry, socio-economic development, and information and knowledge.

Afghanistan is one of beneficiary countries for the third phase of CAWEP. The activity on strengthening collaboration between Afghanistan and Tajikistan on hydromet and flood risk management advanced inclusion of Afghanistan in the wider Central Asia Flood Early Warning System (CAFEWS) and supported development of the Afghanistan Hydromet Atlas, which complements the [Central Asia Hydromet Atlas](#) with detailed information on Afghanistan. The second activity on synchronization of operations of Afghanistan and Central Asia Power Systems did not advance and consultations with Central Asian countries planned for the fall 2021 were canceled due to the change of the regime in August 2021.

*Source:* World Bank, "CAWEP"

