





Section 8

Activity of International Partners in Central Asia

8.1. World Bank

In 2017, the World Bank made its contribution to the High-Level Panel on Water through the organization of regional consultation led by Tajikistan. In July 2017, Tajikistan hosted the second regional consultation on Valuing Water Initiative. The event was aimed at providing exchange of views, experience and best practices, as well as recommendations, which would further create new mechanisms and opportunities to solve water issues at the national and regional levels. Regional consultations are part of a global process contributing to work of the Panel (see [High-Level Panel on Water](#)).

In the Central Asia region, the Water-Energy-Climate Nexus remains an important area of action for 2017, with the ending of the 2nd phase of the Central Asia Energy and Water Development Program (CAEWD), which consists of three pillars:

- 1 Energy Development: Promote and study high-value energy investments that focus on winter energy security, energy efficiency, trade and accountability, and infrastructure planning;

- 2 Water Productivity: Enhance the productive and efficient use of water in agriculture and energy sectors;
- 3 Energy-Water Linkages: Improve the understanding of linkages between energy and water at the national and regional levels through dialogue, energy-water modelling, regional hydrometeorology, and exploring the future impacts of climate change.

To assist countries in adaptation to future climate risks, the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (CAHMP) was continued. It is bolstering weather forecasting and early warning efforts in the region. The project provided cutting-edge technical equipment – such as modern workstations, automated observation networks, access to satellite data and numerical weather prediction – coupled with specialized trainings for participating agencies. Because of these improvements, the forecast accuracy in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan increased by 20 to 30 percent.

Source: World Bank

8.2. German Society for International Cooperation

The German Society for International Cooperation or , Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) carries out its activity in Central Asia under the Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Program as part of the Berlin Process.

In 2017, one of the key events organized by GIZ was the successful launch of a new initiative. For the first time in the history of the Central Asian states, the Amu Darya River Day was celebrated in October-November. The event aimed at strengthening ties between peoples living in the river basin in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. A regional conference “Amu Darya – the River of Friendship and Cooperation” (Turkmenabad), concerts, as well as photo and drawing competitions were held on the occasion of the event.

Significant efforts were focused on strengthening material and technical base of the ICWC Executive Bodies, particularly of BWO Amu Darya and BWO Syr Darya. To increase

technical capacity, as well as improve hydrometric monitoring, modern computers and hydrometric equipment were handed over to BWOs and their branches. In addition, trainings were organized for the staff. Activities were carried out to raise awareness of stakeholders on BWOs' activities. Particularly, working meeting of BWO Amu Darya branches were organized; the draft version of the BWO Amu Darya web-site is developed. A special focus was on improving the structure and form of and unifying reporting of BWOs to ICWC.

Introduction of integrated water resource management is important in Central Asia. In this context, the work was continued with government agencies to develop and implement the modern method of basin planning, including on transboundary rivers. Development of unified approaches to water management in Central Asia enables additional opportunities for cooperation.

Source: GIZ Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Program

8.3. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is the agency for international cooperation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation.

The Agency aims to prevent conflicts, support social and economic development, good governance, and protect environment. Water management is a central aspect of Switzerland's involvement in Central Asia.

In order to tackle water, energy, food and security-related challenges, Switzerland supports dialogue and cooperation in the region through its "Blue Diplomacy" approach. Under this approach, water resources are to be managed, protected and shared equitably among the Central Asian countries.

Among other goals, Blue Diplomacy is also intended to contribute to peaceful coexistence and stability in the region. In June 2017, the Blue Peace Central Asia Conference was organized in Astana to share knowledge on water resources, security, and sustainable growth. On June 17-19, 2017, SDC supported organization of the first "Youth Regional Meeting on Water in Central Asia".

Around 20 young people from Central Asia and the nearby region between the ages of 18 and 30, who are active in the water and sanitation sector, had the opportunity to exchange on and contribute to the required actions aimed at better integrated water management in the region.

8.4. United State Agency for International Development

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

On July 26, 2017, a forum on "**Innovative Water Management for Sustainable Development**" was organized by the USAID Local Governance Project in Dushanbe and chaired by the First Deputy of the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda. It focused on improving the quality and management of drinking water supply services in Tajikistan.

More than 60 participants, including key government counterparts, representatives of the water sector, chairmen of districts and jamoats, and development partners discussed the current state of the drinking water supply in rural Tajikistan and identified ways to increase access through investment and improved management. At the end of the forum participants drafted a resolution with recommendations on ways to improve rural water management, which will be forwarded to the President's Executive Office for approval.

On February 1, 2017, The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan and the

Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia signed a cooperative agreement to implement a five year water management project "**Smart Waters**". The project aims to improve water management training system for professionals, academic researchers and policy makers among the countries of Aral Sea basin.

On 11-13 December 2017, USAID in partnership with the Academy of Sciences and Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan and development partners convened a three-day international workshop on "**Innovations in Marginal Water Resource for Resilient Agriculture and Food Security**". The main purpose of this workshop was to exchange best practices and technologies for better human and ecosystem health. More than 50 scientists, researchers, policy makers from 15 countries gathered in Tashkent under USAID's Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER), which is a competitive grant program designed to increase cooperation and networking between U.S. scientists and local experts.

8.5. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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 trans-boundary water management, training and capacity development, research and development of standards and legislation. Following are some highlights of the OSCE's work in these areas during 2017.

The **OSCE Program Office in Astana** (POiA) worked with IFAS and UNECE in supporting the Aralo-Syr Darya Water Basin Council and the Chu-Talas Water Basin Council in addressing water management challenges. The POiA also supported youth education through the Central Asia Leadership Program on water resources monitoring (in partnership with CAREC) and the Summer School for environmental specialists on methods for monitoring water resources (in partnership with the German-Kazakh University). Both events covered the representatives of the five Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

The **OSCE Program Office in Bishkek** (POiB) continued to support the Kyrgyz-Kazakh Chu-Talas Commission, a body that co-ordinates maintenance and use of infrastructure along the transboundary Chu and Talas Rivers, by funding the publication of its 2007-2016 activities report. OSCE, UNECE and UNESCAP have been supporting the Commission since 2003, and the work conducted by the Commission represents a remarkable success story of shared transboundary water resources management in Central Asia.

The **OSCE Centre in Ashgabat** (CiA) provided support to the State Committee on Environmental Protection and Land Resources of Turkmenistan in the organization of the International Environmental Forum on Climate Change and Water Cooperation in the context of Sustainable Development in Central Asia. The forum brought together more than 200 representatives from governments of all 5 Central Asian countries and strengthened the dialogue on environmental issues between government agencies, the international community, academia and business in Central Asia. The Aarhus Centre in Ashgabat, supported by the CiA, was a co-organizer of the special session of the forum on the role of media in covering environmental problems in the region.

The **OSCE Program Office in Dushanbe** (POiD) supported the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources in the development of regulatory frameworks as well as awareness raising and dissemination of relevant materials. POiD jointly with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan organized training for Tajik officials from different government bodies for exchanging experience on the safety of hydraulic structures and their operational conditions. POiD also in cooperation with Chemonics provided training to newly established Water Users Associations (WUAs) in Khatlon region on institutional and technical issues.

The **OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** assisted in organization of a wetland monitoring mission carried out by the Agency GEF of IFAS (see [Agency GEF of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea for implementation of the Aral Sea Basin and GEF projects](#)).

The **Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities** (OCEEA) has also continued its engagement in and support to the Central Asian Journal of Water Research, a bilingual, interdisciplinary and open access online journal, which connects water experts from Central Asia and beyond (www.water-ca.org).

Source: OSCE Office of Economic and Environmental Activities

8.6. European Union – Central Asia: Environment and Water Cooperation Platform

The EU-Central Asia Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation was established at the EU-CA High Level Conference in Rome (Italy) in 2009. In its core is the EU-Central Asia Working Group (WG) on Environment Climate Change and Water which assists in identification of EU-CA regional cooperation priorities. The WECOOP2 project supports the Platform by strengthening policy dialogues and cooperation at the regional level and between EU and CA. The Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea has been chairing the Working Group since its establishment in 2009.

The EU-Central Asia Cooperation priorities are based on the Joint Declaration of the EU-CA High Level Conference in Milan in October 2015 in accordance with the EU Strategy for Central Asia agreed by the CA countries. It is reflected in the Action Plan, which was endorsed by the [5th WG meeting](#) in December 2016. The Action Plan foresees improving access by the countries of Central Asia to international funds for climate resilient environment/water infrastructure,

green finance and eco-innovation. The EU-CA regional workshops were organized in May and in November 2017 in Almaty, where the relevant Ministries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had face-to-face [working meetings](#) with the major International Financial Institutions (EBRD, KfW, ADB, etc.) to discuss the investment projects pipelines. This [topic](#) was thoroughly discussed at the 6th WG meeting in Astana (EXPO 2017) in July 2017 and at the 7th WG meeting in Brussels in February 2018.

The next steps for 2018 include identification of concrete investment projects in CA countries for IFIs consideration, the 8th EU-Central Asia Working Group meeting in Tashkent 7-8 June 2018, and organization of the EU-Central Asia High Level Conference in the end of 2018.

Source: WECOOP2 project, <http://wecoop2.eu/>