

SECTION

8

Activities of International  
Partners in Central Asia

## 8.1. Asian Development Bank



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been providing technical assistance support and making investments in the Central Asia region, including in the water sector, since its first lending (to Kazakhstan) in 1998. In 2024, ADB's interventions in Central Asia combined strategic country commitments, regional climate action, and holistic support for gender equality, energy transition, and resilient infrastructure. Total commitments in the region in 2024 made up \$2.6 billion.

In 2024, ADB refreshed its [Strategy 2030](#), originally launched in 2018, establishing a renewed roadmap to support a more prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific. The updated strategy sharpens ADB's emphasis on key regional priorities: climate action, private sector development, regional cooperation and public goods, digital transformation, resilience, and empowerment. To implement this vision, ADB commits to institutional reforms to effectively deploy an additional \$100 billion in lending over the next decade and to deepen collaboration with other multilateral development banks.

### Projects in Central Asia in 2024

ADB endorsed new country partnership strategies for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan through to 2028: (1) Turkmenistan's [strategy](#) seeks to accelerate progress toward more sustainable and climate-resilient economic growth by promoting structural reforms, gender equality, and good governance; (2) Uzbekistan's [strategy](#) aims to foster a green, inclusive, and competitive economy that supports the private sector and promotes investments in human capital.

### Regional programs

ADB has assisted the [Central Asia Regional Economic \(CAREC\) Program](#) for regional cooperation and integration. This partnership of 11 countries<sup>253</sup> supported by six multilateral institutions promotes development through cooperation, leading to accelerated growth and poverty reduction. In 2024, a regional 3-year climate change [action plan](#) (CCAP) was endorsed by the CAREC Ministerial conference (Astana, [November 8](#)). The plan, developed with support from ADB, prioritizes investments to implement the CAREC Climate Change Vision, including early-warning systems, resilient infrastructure, and renewable energy. A dedicated fund to prepare climate projects under the plan was also launched with initial funding of \$5 million.

At COP29, ADB unveiled the "Glaciers to Farms" regional initiative<sup>254</sup>, aiming to mobilize up to \$3.5 billion

from diverse partners – ADB, the Green Climate Fund, governments, development agencies, and the private sector – to support sustainable water management, climate-resilient farming, and social protection for communities impacted by glacial melt in mountain areas. The program has already initiated watershed studies across Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (Baku, 14 November).

### National projects and programs

**Kazakhstan.** As part of its energy transition, Kazakhstan and ADB [signed](#) a memorandum of understanding at COP29 to explore early retirement or repurposing of coal-fired power plants under ADB's [Energy Transition Mechanism](#). ADB is providing technical assistance for prefeasibility studies (Baku, 13 November). A non-sovereign loan equivalent to \$5 million helps extend [credit](#) to country's micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), with 50% earmarked for women-led enterprises and 10% for green loans aimed at energy-efficient equipment and small-scale renewables.

**Kyrgyz Republic.** ADB committed \$56 million to promote sustainable tourism and improve wastewater management around Issyk-Kul Lake ([Issyk-Kul Environmental Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Project](#)), alongside \$109.5 million to strengthen the Issyk-Kul Ring Road's resilience to floods and landslides and improve road safety ([Issyk-Kul Ring Road Improvement Project](#)). The project also enhances women's participation in transport sector management. ADB also committed \$32.35 million in additional financing for the [Naryn Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Development Program](#), which aims to provide potable water and sanitation for up to 100,000 people and 37 education and health facilities, while also supporting sector reforms and climate change initiatives.

**Tajikistan.** A \$17.5 million grant supports training for 10,000 women in six rural districts of Khatlon Province. The program offers training in financial management, sustainable production methods (e.g., nature-based solutions, pest management, high-value crops, bee-keeping), plus support for survivors of domestic violence via counseling, livelihood training, and shelter ([Resilient Livelihoods and Empowerment of Rural Women](#)). To expand Tajikistan's supply of renewable energy, ADB committed a \$21 million grant to replace a major generation unit at the Golovnaya 240-megawatt hydropower plant. The investment will help increase the plant's capacity to produce 274 megawatts of electricity by 2026, boosting energy supplies for both national and regional grids ([Golovnaya 240-Megawatt Hydropower Plant Rehabilitation](#)).

Given escalating climate risks – melting glaciers, floods, droughts, and heat stress – ADB and Tajik authorities launched a climate finance plan, estimating \$8 billion needed by 2030 to boost energy efficiency,

<sup>253</sup> Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, People's Republic of China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

<sup>254</sup> In Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and Pakistan

renewable energy, green transportation, waste management, and climate-resilient agriculture. A \$50 million policy-based grant ([Enabling Climate-Responsive Business Environment Improvement Program](#) (Sub-program 1)) supports reforms in digitalization, trade, infrastructure governance, fiscal transparency, and MSME opportunities. Additional technical assistance accompanies these reforms.

**Turkmenistan.** ADB initiated technical assistance to assess wind energy potential, including feasibility studies to guide governmental planning for wind-generated power ([Evaluation of Wind Potential for Renewable Energy Development](#)). Under the small-scale technical assistance of \$225,000, ADB helped prepare a diagnostic study and develop a strategy to promote and advance private sector participation and public-private partnerships in Turkmenistan ([Advancement of Private Sector Participation and Development of the Roadmap for Public-Private Partnerships](#)).

**Uzbekistan.** ADB extended a \$250 million policy-based loan, mobilizing equivalent co-financing to scale up climate action. The [Accelerating the Climate Transition for Green, Inclusive, and Resilient Economic Growth Program](#) focuses on: (1) enhancing climate resilience in water, land, and agriculture; (2) accelerating low-carbon development in energy and transport; (3) establishing social protection in at least three vulnerable regions; (4) strengthening institutional frameworks for climate transition among state-owned enterprises. ADB also extended non-sovereign loans amounting to \$97.5 million (sum equivalent) to two major banks, channeling at least 20% to women-led enterprises and 10% to green-tech adopters. Outside Tashkent, agricultural enterprises are major beneficiaries ([Hamkorbank Supporting Sustainable and Inclusive Access to Finance Project](#)).

Source: ADB Annual Report 2024, <https://www.adb.org/>

## 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 have since grown to 110 approved members worldwide.

The 2024 AIIB Annual Meeting themed "Building Resilient Infrastructure for All" took place in the historic city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan (September 25-26). The Annual Meeting agenda provided a deep dive into AIIB's Corporate Strategy, operational priorities, policies and projects, showcasing the pivotal role of AIIB in Financing Infrastructure for Tomorrow.

### Projects in Central Asia in 2024

AIIB and the Government of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** signed a Joint Declaration. The declaration outlines a shared vision and strategic directions for a comprehensive investment pipeline from 2025 to 2027. Both parties agreed to promote green infrastructure as well as connectivity and regional cooperation. The declaration also highlights the importance of advancing technology-enabled infrastructure, mobilizing private capital and creating an enabling environment for private sector participation.

In 2024, AIIB approved financing (\$650 million) for the [Transport Resilience and Connectivity Enhancement Project](#) to provide safe, efficient and climate resilient connectivity along the Karagandy-Zhezkazgan corridor and improve road sector management practices.

In **Tajikistan**, AIIB has approved a loan equivalent to \$75.5 million for the construction of a 920-meter-long bridge and its approaches along the Obigarm-



Nurobod section of M41 International Highway. The project will contribute to cross-border connectivity.

Financing for a [Rogun Hydropower Development Project – Phase 1](#) has been approved (December 19). AIIB will support the development of a 3,780 MW hydropower plant in Tajikistan by investing \$200 million in certain components of the Project.

The AIIB further solidified its long-standing partnership with **Uzbekistan** through a series of agreements signed in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, at the Bank's 9th Annual Meeting. Particularly, the Bank and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) signed an agreement for a \$8.8 million contribution to support the [Karakalpakstan and Khorezm Water Supply and Sanitation Project](#). This initiative aims to improve water resource management, sanitation services and flood risk management in some of Uzbekistan's most water-stressed regions. AIIB has also signed agreements with several Uzbekistani banks to support green infrastructure, renewable energy, and education ([September, Samarkand](#)). In particular, financing (\$250 million) was approved for the program "[Accelerating the Uzbekistan Climate Transition for Green, Inclusive, and Resilient Economic Growth](#)".

Source: <https://www.aiib.org/en/index.html>

## 8.3. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development



**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 2024

EBRD has set a new operational record in Central Asia by investing €2.26 billion in regional economies through 121 projects in 2024 – almost doubling its annual investment in Central Asia compared with 2023. 58 per cent of investments were aimed at supporting green economy projects.

EBRD has been one of **Kazakhstan's** key international partners since 1993. Over this period, the Bank has invested more than €10 billion across 300+ projects, making the country one of the Bank's largest recipients in Central Asia. EBRD's work in Kazakhstan focuses on three main areas: (1) green economy and decarbonisation; (2) infrastructure and municipal services; and, (3) private sector and digitalization.

A financial package of \$60 million was **provided** to the country's major private lender, Bank Center Credit (BCC), with the half allocated under the Green Economy Financing Facility II to expand access to green technologies for businesses and households, and half to finance SMEs nationwide. A €96.4 million in the form of a sovereign loan was allocated for the construction of **new wastewater treatment facilities** – the EBRD's largest municipal project in Central Asia – improving environmental standards and urban infrastructure in the city of Aktobe.

EBRD has been present in the **Kyrgyz Republic** since 1992, investing about €1 billion across 250 projects. In 2024 the Bank approved a **new five-year country strategy** (2024-2029), centered on: (1) SMEs and inclusive access to finance; (2) sustainable infrastructure, including renewable energy, water systems and regional connectivity; (3) greener and better-governed economy.

To date, the EBRD has financed more than €190 million for 31 water projects nationwide, making it the leading lender in the sector. Among key projects, the EBRD provided a €17 million package to upgrade **water supply and wastewater systems** in Kemin, Shopokov and Talas. The Bank also expanded its US\$50 million **green lending facility** (KyrSEFF III), partnering with three local banks to provide financing for SMEs and households. The programme supports energy efficiency, cli-

mate adaptation, sustainable water use and inclusive green products.

The EBRD has been active in **Tajikistan** since 1993, investing nearly €1 billion across 175 projects, with a focus on energy, infrastructure, the financial sector and SMEs.

In 2024 the Bank significantly expanded its support for the country's financial sector by launching the largest financing programs to date for local banks, including **First MicroFinanceBank** and **Bank Arvand**. These initiatives channel resources into green investments, youth and women entrepreneurship, and broaden access to modern technologies and finance for businesses and households nationwide. The EBRD also continued to address critical infrastructure needs, jointly with the Swiss government allocating €2.7 million for **water and wastewater upgrades** in Fayzobod and nearby communities, strengthening climate resilience and improving services for over 30,000 people.

Since 1992, the EBRD has invested over €333 million in 87 projects in **Turkmenistan**, mainly in industrial production and SME support. These efforts have helped local companies modernize and expand into regional markets. A **new five-year strategy**, developed with national authorities, will prioritise renewable energy, water management, and the Trans-Caspian transport corridor, positioning Turkmenistan as a key link between Europe and Asia.

**Uzbekistan** remains the largest recipient of EBRD financing in Central Asia, with total investments reaching €5 billion across 170 projects since 1992. In 2024, the Bank approved a new country strategy until 2029, focusing on: (1) decarbonisation and renewable energy development; (2) private sector growth and digitalization; (3) business climate and infrastructure improvements.

Key recent projects include: (1) the 100 MW Sarimay Solar **plant** (€50 million) and a 500 MWh **battery storage system** with a 200 MW solar plant in Tashkent region (€229 million); (2) the region's first **renewable hydrogen facility** (€58 million); (3) a \$20 million **financing package** for Ipoteka Bank to promote green lending and women's entrepreneurship.

At the **regional level**, since 2024 the Agrifood Nexus Programme has been implemented to support agribusiness in the five Central Asian countries. This initiative is part of the broader **Nexus Project** – carried out by the EBRD in partnership with the FAO, OECD, UNECE, and the SIC ICWC.

Source: <https://www.ebrd.com>

## 8.4. European Union

The European Union's engagement with the region has significantly expanded since the early 1990s. In 2019, the Council adopted a new EU Strategy on Central Asia.

The new-generation bilateral Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCAs) form a cornerstone of EU engagement.

In 2024, the European Union (EU) further consolidated its strategic engagement in Central Asia, combining political dialogue with tangible projects. The European Parliament adopted a resolution updating the EU's regional strategy, reaffirming priorities such as support for green transition and sustainable development, transport and energy connectivity (including the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor), rule of law and civil society, digitalization, education and research, as well as regional cooperation on water and climate (EP Resolution of 17 January 2024).

The October 2023 [Joint EU-Central Asia Roadmap](#) served as the operational blueprint for implementation.

Water management and climate resilience emerged as key themes. Dushanbe hosted the High-Level Forum on Water and Climate Change, organized by UNDP and the EU (June 10). Tashkent welcomed the EU-Central Asia Young Leaders' Conference, which gathered emerging leaders from across the region to debate sustainable water solutions (October 30-31).

### Activities in Central Asia in 2024

**Kazakhstan** continued cooperation under the **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA)**. A €9 million [Cooperation Facility](#) (2021-2024) supported green growth and trade, the green transition, and the rule of law. Flagship projects included **JANARTU**, enhancing community self-governance in rural areas (€ 400,000, 2024-2027), and the **Arnika** initiative on civil society's role in climate action in Karaganda.

**Kyrgyzstan** took a major step forward by signing an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement



with the EU, broadening cooperation in trade, sustainable development, and security ([June 25](#)). On the practical side, the EU, together with the EIB and EBRD, co-financed the long-awaited modernization of Cholpon-Ata's water supply system, [inaugurated](#) in May. Overall, the EU remains the largest donor to the country's water and municipal service sectors.

**Tajikistan** [concluded](#) negotiations on a new EPCA, complementing the existing 2010 PCA. Under the €91 million 2021-2024 package, three key projects advanced in 2024: a €30m budget support for education and public finance management, the €15m Sustainable Energy Support Programme (with €10m for technical assistance), and a €14m [Rural Water and Sanitation Project](#).

**Turkmenistan** became a hub for connectivity initiatives, notably hosting the October launch of the **Trans-Caspian Coordination Platform**. At the 23rd EU-Turkmenistan Joint Committee in December, both sides discussed trade, investment, and green energy (Brussels, [December 4](#)). A new flagship [initiative](#), EU for a Green Turkmenistan (2024-2028), was also rolled out to strengthen policy dialogue on energy, environment, and climate.

**Uzbekistan** advanced reforms in agriculture and education with EU support. The EU-AGRIN project [introduced](#) a solar-powered drip irrigation system in Akkurgan, cutting water use by 60%. In April, the EU [disbursed](#) €6m in budget support for **agricultural reform**, while major investment in vocational education included the renovation of colleges in **Khorezm** and **Karakalpakstan**, implemented with UNESCO.

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

## 8.5. German Society for International Cooperation

As a globally active federal enterprise for international development cooperation, the German Society for International Cooperation/Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH/ supports the German Federal Government in implementation of its development policy goals.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, GIZ has been implementing programs and projects in Central Asia.



## Regional Programs and Projects on Water, Environment, and Development

The German government, in collaboration with its Central Asian partners, launched the **Green Central Asia Initiative**<sup>255</sup> (with a budget exceeding €450 million) in 2020 to engage in a political dialogue process on climate, environment, and security.

Green Central Asia **Phase I** (2020-2024) was instrumental in facilitating the drafting of the **Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Central Asia**, first ever regional framework policy document **adopted** (2024) by all five Central Asian countries in their post-independence. Thus, the five countries were acknowledging the changing climate as a challenge to sustainable development in the years to come.

Currently in its **Phase II** (2024-2028), Green Central Asia commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office carries on the work commenced during the previous phase concentrating in particular on the implementation of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Central Asia. Particularly, Green Central Asia Phase II will further the establishment of a permanently working Secretariat to support the activities the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Central Asia.

Recognizing glaciers' paramount importance, a **Regional Working Group on monitoring and modeling of glaciers in Central Asia** composed of representatives of relevant government agencies of the Central Asian countries was formed under Green Central Asia Phase I which continues its work under Phase II. The purpose of the working group is to discuss joint glacier monitoring and development of modeling tools to facilitate coordinated decision-making. Currently, four countries are collaborating on glacier monitoring and modelling in Central Asia with Turkmenistan being an observer.

As water and energy are deeply embedded resources in Central Asia, a **Regional Working Group on a Mutually Beneficial Water-Energy Mechanism** was established under the Green Central Asia regional programme. The programme in coordination with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and SIC ICWC facilitates the working group to promote dialogue among representatives of Central Asian countries on how they can further cooperate towards more efficient and sus-

tainable water and energy resources management. The 3rd meeting of the Regional Working Group took place in Tashkent facilitating technical-level discussions and knowledge exchange to enhance mutually beneficial water and energy cooperation in Central Asia (**December 10**).

As exchanging ideas and sharing science-driven best practices is essential, Green Central Asia Phase II collaborates with leading research institutions such as the Helmholtz-Centre Potsdam – German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and the Potsdam-Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) to connect them with their Central Asian counterparts to work on and suggest policymakers up-to-date weather, drought, glacier modelling and forecasting techniques.

Aside from supporting the implementation of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation in Central Asia, the programme will continue policy dialogue to strengthen regional environmental security cooperation and enhance adaptive capacities of the countries of Central Asia based on best international practices. Green Central Asia Phase II has co-financing from the European Union to support **Turkmenistan's green agenda**, notably methane reduction thus enhancing overall policy dialogue between the European Union and Turkmenistan.

Regional **“Climate Sensitive Water Resources Management in Central Asia”** programme (2023-2028)<sup>256</sup> implemented in parallel with the Green Central Asia Phase II aims to promote IWRM principles in Central Asia by supporting basin dialogues along the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. This programme will also further policy-scientific dialogue between policymakers and practitioners, support capacity needs of transboundary water operators and bring best foreign practices on automation at selected pilot sites of transnational irrigation water bodies. In addition to SDC co-financing, this programme has also co-sponsorship by the EU's “Team Europe Initiative” (TEI) on Water, Energy and Climate Change in Central Asia<sup>257</sup>.

The GIZ Team **supports** the technical **Secretariat of the TEI**, organizes capacity building and implements for the EU activities in the water sector such as supporting regional cooperation on water management and the monitoring of water quality and groundwater resources.

**Source:** GIZ Green Central Asia Program

<sup>255</sup> This initiative is a significant contribution to the Team Europe Initiative on Water, Energy, and Climate Change in Central Asia

<sup>256</sup> Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and co-financed by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)

<sup>257</sup> Team Europe consists of the European Union, the EU member states (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia) as well as the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. TEI was primarily established to develop complementarities with ongoing projects and to boost the blue and green transition of Central Asia

## 8.6. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a multidisciplinary, inter-governmental organization comprising 38 member countries and provides a unique forum and the analytical capacity to assist governments to compare and exchange policy experiences, and to identify and promote good practices through policy decisions and recommendations.

The OECD is working to help developed and developing countries meet the water challenge. The OECD contributes analyses to improve the information base, identifies good practices, and provides a forum for exchanging country experiences.

OECD work on water focusses on the economic and financial dimensions of water management and improving governance.

In addition to analytical work, the OECD works with selected regions and countries to facilitate the reform of water policies. The OECD has enhanced its convening power and capacity to structure discussion among stakeholders on water issues, by setting up international initiatives including the [Roundtable on Financing Water](#), the [Water Governance Initiative](#), and the [Network of Economic Regulators](#).

The OECD facilitates the [Global Commission on the Economics of Water \(GCEW\)](#) which was convened by the Government of the Netherlands and launched in May 2022 with the aim of redefining the way water is valued and governed for the common good. The GCEW published its report [The Economics of Water: Valuing the Hydrological Cycle as a Global Common Good](#) in October 2024.

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

### Activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in 2024

In Central Asia, the OECD works with partner countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) through its [GREEN Action Task Force](#). The GREEN Action Task Force annual meeting in 2024 was



held on 16-17 April 2024 in Chişinău, Moldova, with an [agenda](#) that reviewed progress with implementation of the programme of work for 2023-24 and a substantive focus on the strengthening compliance with environmental regulations, with a focus on mining/critical minerals, financing water in EECCA countries, mobilising finance for biodiversity protection in EECCA and a special session supporting Ukraine in an environmentally sustainable recovery the Russian aggression against the country, and strengthening the economic and environmental resilience of the neighbouring countries. The meeting also provided an update on implementation of the [energy-water-land use nexus in Central Asia](#).

The OECD assists the countries in **EECCA** in adopting a more integrated approach to water management, applying robust economic and financial analyses and improving multi stakeholder participation. It also helps in identifying and removing some of the key obstacles to effective and efficient water management, while reflecting countries' level of socio-economic development. National Policy Dialogues are multi-stakeholder platforms that bring together all interests in water management in a country. They are jointly facilitated by the OECD and UNECE and fed by robust analytical work, often lead to practical implementation of policy advice. The OECD focuses on the economic aspects of water resources management (policy coherence, managing water for growth and making the best use of economic instruments for water management), and on the financial sustainability of water supply and sanitation services (strategic and mid-term financial planning and financial support mechanisms to the sector).

Work in **Eastern Europe and the Caucasus** in 2024 was carried out within the frame of the EU-funded [EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme](#) which the OECD implements in partnership with the Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The programme presented its results at a side-event at the UNECE 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention titled "[Water Management Innovations in the EaP countries](#)" (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 22 October).

In **Central Asia**, work in 2024 has focussed on the analysis of [energy, water and food security as part of](#)

a programme of work on the "nexus". In 2024, this work led to further dissemination of the publication of a series of case studies titled [Climate-Resilient Agribusiness in Central Asia: The water, energy, land-use nexus approach](#). A range of events were delivered in 2024 including: (1) a side event "Finance and Investment for Water, Energy and Land-use Nexus in Central Asia" at the Third High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, June 11); (2) an online workshop with the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of Uzbekistan to support the country's efforts to develop a new [Climate Change law](#) (July 12); (3) a side event on [effective climate action with a nexus approach](#) with the

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland and the UNECE's Water Convention Secretariat during the UNECE Water Convention 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties (Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 24); (4) the [3rd Meeting of the Regional Working Group on a Mutually Beneficial Water-Energy Mechanism](#), organised in partnership with the Green Central Asia Programme (Tashkent, December 10); (5) a [Policy Dialogue on Water Finance and Technologies in Uzbekistan](#) organised in partnership with the Asia Water Council (Tashkent, December 11). The nexus programme was launched in 2023 and the OECD partners with SIC-ICWC, EBRD, FAO and UNECE on this five-year regional programme.

Source: OECD

## 8.7. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



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

### Activities in 2024

#### OSCE Programme Office in Astana

In 2024, the Programme Office in Astana continued its efforts to promote integrated water resource management and regional cooperation in Kazakhstan. The work focused on three key areas: (1) enhancing educational programs and specialist qualification; (2) promoting basin-level water management; and, (3) strengthening transboundary water cooperation.

In collaboration with the (1) International Water Assessment Center, the OSCE Programme Office in Astana produced a comprehensive analytical study evaluating Kazakhstan's water management educational programmes. This initiative was concluded with the organization of a roundtable to discuss findings and steps forward in addressing outlined recommendations (Astana, [September 24](#)); (2) SIC ICWC, organized a specialized workshop on contemporary systems and methods for hydraulic structure safety. This technical training brought together ten basin inspection specialists to enhance their theoretical knowledge and exchange knowledge on practical solutions for monitoring, controlling, and automating hydraulic structures (Tashkent, [July 22-24](#)).

In the area of basin-level water management, throughout 2024 the OSCE Programme Office in Astana completed the initial phase of a [two-year project](#) supporting the Tobol-Torgay River Basin Council. This phase included two comprehensive river basin assessments and several targeted capacity-building trainings for the river basin council stakeholders. These efforts have established a foundation for developing an actionable strategic basin management plan focused on the sustainable development of the river basin.

In the framework of the continued support to the Chu-Talas Water Commission, the Office co-operated with the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek to strengthen confidence-building measures in transboundary water co-operation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

#### OSCE Program Office in Bishkek

In the framework of continued efforts in facilitating transboundary water co-operation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek implemented the following activities:

- ▣ In 2024, under intergovernmental agreements, Kyrgyz and Kazakh authorities conducted joint water monitoring and data exchange. The Kyrgyz Hydrometeorology Service sampled the Ala-Archa, Alamedin, Kara-Balta, Chu, and Talas rivers (including border sites at Kamyschanovka, Steponoye, and Uch-Korgon), while Kazakh specialists carried out parallel sampling on the Kara-Balta, Chu, and Talas rivers in their border regions (February, April, July, and October).

- ▣ Water analyses assessed 17 physical and chemical indicators, with experts reporting no high pollutant concentrations in monitored sections of the Chu, Talas, and Kara-Balta rivers. Using this data, a

consultant prepared a report on the state of water resources in the Chu and Talas basins. POiB hosted the 12th Meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Protection (WGEP), where findings were presented alongside an annual activity report. The roundtable gathered 30 representatives from the Chu-Talas Water Commission, water management agencies, and hydrometeorology services of both countries, with the next meeting planned in Kazakhstan in 2025 (Bishkek, [December 4](#)).

### OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe

The Programme Office in Dushanbe (POiD) advanced Tajikistan's water management and regional cooperation through high-level events, capacity building, and strategic partnerships.

The POiD supported: (1) the 3rd High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028", including a side event "Fostering cooperation in education and science to promote IWRM: Novel approaches to capacity building and development" (Dushanbe, [June 12](#)); (2) the 14th International Drainage Workshop with 200 participants, focusing on irrigation, climate adaptation, disaster risk management, and the water-food-energy nexus (Dushanbe, [May 30-June 1](#)); (3) 4th Kafirnighan River Basin Council meeting, in partnership with the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MEWR), with 46 participants to discuss water reforms and the integration of basin activities into regional development initiatives (Dushanbe, [April 17](#)); (4) in collaboration with UNECE, the 3rd inter-institutional working group meeting on tailings safety and water pollution prevention in Tajikistan (Dushanbe, [May 15](#)); (5) in collaboration with Tajikistan's National Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (TajNCID), 12th TajNCID meeting, which saw the participation of 80 individuals discussing the 2024-2028 Land Reclamation and Irrigation Sector Development Program (Dushanbe, [December 11](#)).

To strengthen institutional capacity, the OSCE POiD organized a series of training sessions for water professionals in Tajikistan: (1) a two-day workshop for the Syrdarya Women Basin Forum to promote greater participation of women in water management (Khujand, [September 27-28](#)); (2) 3-day training sessions in the Khatlon and Sughd regions, engaging 55 personnel from the subordinate structures of the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MEWR) and the Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation (ALRI) (Khatlon region, [October 24-26](#), [November 29-December 1](#); Sughd region, [June 19-21](#)).

The OSCE POiD supported the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in reviewing and translating the "Standard Regulatory Requirements for Wastewater Quality Control." Developed with OSCE POiD's assistance in 2023, this document was approved in 2024 and presented at a roundtable, where 30 specialists from various sectors discussed its implica-

tions for water quality and public health (Dushanbe, [December 20](#)).

### OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

The PCUz worked with the Ministry of Ecology to monitor pollution in the Syr Darya Basin and assess transboundary impacts of toxic waste. In 2023-2024, pollutants were tracked in Vuadil, Madaniyat, and Baymak along the Shakhimardan, Mayluu-Suu, and Sumsar rivers to strengthen disaster risk reduction.

In 2024, PCUz also supported the Uzbek Agency of IFAS by donating a modern hardware to improve data collection and analysis in such fields as air pollution, water quality, and the impact of agriculture and industry on the environment.

Efforts to conserve the Aral Sea ecosystem, including new reservoirs and dams, have contributed to the stabilization and partly restored local biodiversity, but climate change demands continued monitoring. In 2025, PCUz will assist IFAS in assessing the effectiveness of rehabilitation by tracking flora and fauna in wetlands formed on the former seabed.

### OSCE Centre in Ashgabat

In 2024, OSCE Centre in Ashgabat organized a seminar on "Management approach and know-how tools for protection of critical water infrastructure from natural or man-made disasters." Twenty representatives from the Ministry of Defense (Main Rescue Department under the Ministry of Defense), Ministry of Environmental Protection, State Committee for Water Management and other relevant ministries and agencies of Turkmenistan attended, while international experts from Albania, the Netherlands, and Moldova presented digital hydrologic software and innovative tools to strengthen critical water infrastructure resilience, disaster risk mitigation, and to implement the flood frequency analysis (Ashgabat, [September 24](#)).

### Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE Secretariat

In 2024, the OSCE Secretariat's Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) supported Central Asian countries in implementing water management commitments and fostering regional dialogue.

OCEEA continued the project "Women, Water Management and Conflict Prevention – Phase III", strengthening inclusive governance and women's capacity in mediation and peacebuilding.

Together with CAREC and SIWI, it also organized regular capacity-building sessions for the [Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan](#), promoting knowledge exchange and regional cooperation.

In partnership with the Swiss Government, OCEEA launched the “Drops of the Future Workshop Series” on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, equipping young professionals across CA countries with the tools to address climate risks and manage competing demands for water. By integrating conceptual frameworks with practical, solution-driven strategies, the workshops have strengthened participants’ ability to navigate complex trade-offs in water, energy and food systems. The initiative builds on an ongoing co-operation with international and regional organizations, ensuring close collaboration with OSCE Field Operations and key partners to maximise impact. Outcomes from a Tajikistan workshop were presented at the Dushanbe Water Conference

through youth, women, and science forums (Dushanbe, June).

OCEEA also co-hosted the “Institutions for Water, Peace, and Cooperation” seminar series at Stockholm World Water Week, contributed to Water Day at the 14th Central Asia Leadership Program in Almaty (September), and presented results of the Drops of the Future series at the OSCE Academy Security Conference in Bishkek, highlighting links between the Water-Energy-Food Nexus and regional security (December 16-17).

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 is the final year of its **Cooperation Programme for Central Asia (2022-2025)**, maintaining 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.

Through the bilateral portfolios, Switzerland aims to see People live and work – reasonably protected from natural hazards – in resilient settings and use quality public infrastructure services. The Swiss programme is building on past interventions in the region to support sustainable and equitable management of (sub-) river basins at regional and transboundary levels. The programme is coherently working 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 is aiming 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 next Cooperation Programme for 2026-2029 is currently in the process of being finalized.

### Kyrgyz Republic

Switzerland supported the Kyrgyz government agencies in implementing the **National Water Resources Management Program (NWRMP)**, reinforcing the basin approach as a systemic decision taken by the National Water Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, at the end of 2023. Key measures, including basin organizations, basin plans, and water information systems, were successfully implemented through this Swiss-funded project, carried out by the World Bank and concluded in 2024. Complementary to NWRMP, Switzerland supports the **Water Use Permits Project** aiming at piloting introduction of new surface and reinforcement of ground water and water pollution permits systems. The water use permits is a key regulatory instrument ensuring sustainable use of water resources. Additionally, urban and rural resilience was strengthened through innovative initiatives such as agro-insurance schemes, local risk mapping, and best practices in resilient urban development. The Ministry of Emergency Situations effectively applied skills gained through regular and tailor-made training provided by the Swiss regional Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) advisor (based in Dushanbe), demonstrating their impact during emergency situations in 2024. Furthermore, the sustainability of the energy sector saw significant progress through annual tariff adjustments, a key conditionality of the **Kyrgyz Electricity Sector Modernization and Sustainability (KEMS) project**, implemented by the World Bank, marking a historic breakthrough in the sector’s modernization and long-term sustainability.

### Tajikistan

Switzerland has supported the strengthening of the legal framework for local development and water management in the Syrdarya River Basin, integrating socio-economic development plans with River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). This effort contributes to the implementation of water sector reform and the achievement of SDGs 6 and 13. Local decision-

making has improved as River Basin Organizations (RBOs) facilitate discussions for tailored water solutions. Additionally, access to quality and affordable public services, such as water, sanitation, and electricity, has been enhanced through better infrastructure management. Water fee collection increased in urban (84%) and rural (82.5%) areas, while Switzerland's district WASH planning approach expanded regionally, providing safe drinking water to 50,000 people and improved sanitation to 350,000, significantly boosting public health. Swiss support also advanced electricity access in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO), with the construction of key electrical substations at Khorog Pamir I and Sebzor Hydropower Plants. Furthermore, urban and rural areas in Tajikistan are now better equipped to handle climate change and disasters, thanks to stronger local capacities for emergency preparedness and risk-informed development planning, achieved through improved hazard response, enhanced weather forecasting, risk-informed urban planning, and remote modeling of glacier lakes and permafrost.

### Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has made significant progress in strengthening its water sector<sup>258</sup>, developing a comprehensive strategic and regulatory framework based on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles. The Parliament has initiated the first reading of the draft Water Code, while the Water Strategy for 2024-2026 is under review by the Cabinet of Ministers. Switzerland has played a key role in supporting the drafting of these important documents and facilitating Uzbekistan's ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health. These efforts have embedded IWRM principles into the water sector, ultimately enhancing the livelihoods of the population. Furthermore, public services in the water sector have been strengthened with the establishment of the Information, Analytical, and Resource Centre, now integrated into the Water Sector Reforms Centre, with expanded authority and political influence. Switzerland's ongoing support in capacity building and the provision of digital tools ensures the sustainability of water sector reforms. Additionally, rural communities have also benefited from improved preparedness through public-private partnerships, where Agrobank and the Ministry of Water Resources have established **irrigators schools (Suvchilar Maktabi)** across provinces. Switzerland has supported 13 of these schools, helping to build climate resilience by constructing automatic agrometeorological stations.

### Regional cooperation and coordination

In continuation of its efforts in the three focus countries, Switzerland remains actively engaged in advo-

ating for regional cooperation and coordination around Water, Infrastructure and Climate Change issues in Central Asia. The Swiss flagship initiative, **Blue Peace Central Asia** underlines the Swiss commitment to hydro-diplomacy and promoting of water as vector towards peace, stability and sustainable development. Switzerland continues to engage with and strengthen regional organizations and dialogue platforms, foster an evidence-based dialogue and identify strategic demonstration projects to set best practices in water cooperation in the region. Through Blue Peace Central Asia, transboundary water management cooperation has been strengthened between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan with the rehabilitation of two water flow-monitoring stations on transboundary canals and the establishment of an operational management framework. Moreover, progress has been made in establishing dialogue platforms in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins. These efforts aim to leverage technology and digitalization, alongside improved governance frameworks, to enhance data sharing and transboundary water management.

The **Smart and Precise Prognostic Hydrology for Innovative Risk Management and Resource Use Efficiency in Central Asia (SAPPHIRE)** project enables an exchange platform for all hydromets in the region. The project modernizes operational hydrology workflows in Central Asia Hydromet organisations, streamlines data management and processing steps, improves quality of forecasts of river discharge and builds capacity and interagency regional cooperation. By integrating information on snow for hydrological forecasting, SAPPHIRE is directly linked to the **Swiss Cryospheric Observation and Modelling for improved Adaptation in Central Asia (CROMO-ADAPT)** project, which strengthens the glacier, snow and permafrost monitoring systems in Central Asia. CROMO ADAPT 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.

Progress is being made in fostering regional cooperation and sustainable management of water and energy resources in Central Asia. The Swiss-supported **Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP)** trust fund serves as a key instrument for delivering high-quality operations, such as dialogues on regional projects like Kamara-Ata and the participation of the high-level delegation at the Kyrgyz Republic International Energy Investment Forum in Vienna, Austria. See Section [World Bank](#).

Finally, Switzerland is launching a new project on **Regional Groundwater Management, building on the**

<sup>258</sup> National Water Resources Management Project in Uzbekistan (NWRM) [https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/uzbekistan/ru/home/sotrudnitschestvo/proekty.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/2013/7F08308/phas\\_e3?oldPagePath=/content/countries/uzbekistan/ru/home/internationale-zusammenarbeit/projekte.html](https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/uzbekistan/ru/home/sotrudnitschestvo/proekty.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/2013/7F08308/phas_e3?oldPagePath=/content/countries/uzbekistan/ru/home/internationale-zusammenarbeit/projekte.html)

**Governance of Groundwater Resources in Trans-boundary Aquifers (GGRETA)** project.

**Publications.** [Unveiling the Future Water Pulse of Central Asia: A Comprehensive 21st Century Hydrological Forecast from Stochastic Water Balance](#)

**Modeling:** This study uses a new dataset on gauge locations and catchments to assess the impact of 21st-century climate change on the hydrology of 221 high-mountain catchments in Central Asia.

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

## 8.9. World Bank



For more than 30 years, the Bank has supported the efforts of Central Asian countries in improving the living standards of their people and promoting economic growth. Now, the Bank is increasingly adopting a regional approach to tackle the development challenges of Central Asian countries, through cross-border cooperation, fostering dialogue, and knowledge sharing across key sectors such as energy and water, transportation, and healthcare.

### Activities in 2024

#### Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is implementing large-scale initiatives in the field of green energy. A memorandum with the EU has been signed on developing value chains for green hydrogen and batteries. Together with the China Energy Investment Corporation, a major wind power plant is built in the Zhambyl province. A workshop on energy tariff reform was held in Astana with the World Bank support. In addition, the second Irrigation and Drainage Improvement Project is [ongoing](#), having already improved irrigation and drainage services on 23,000 ha of irrigated land, with coverage expected to expand by another 39,000 ha by the end of the year.

#### Kyrgyzstan

A key priority has been the preparation for the construction of the **Kambarata 1 Hydropower Plant** – a strategic project aimed at significantly strengthening the country's energy infrastructure. The World Bank has [provided support](#) in the following areas: (1) updating previous studies to assess the project's technical feasibility and economic viability. This included a comprehensive review of existing feasibility studies, additional engineering surveys, and detailed consultations with international experts on dam safety, hydrology, and geology; (2) revising social and environmental documentation, establishing an expert group dedicated to these issues, and developing a local-level benefit-sharing mechanism; (3) developing a robust financial model for the project.

In parallel with this cornerstone project, the advancement of other renewable energy sources is progressing. This includes the construction of the country's first large-scale solar power plant, the 100 MW Kulanak HPP on the Naryn River, and a 50 MW solar power plant situated in the Issyk-Kul province.

#### Tajikistan

The country has prioritized hydropower and infrastructure projects. Specifically, the Rogun Hydropower [Project](#) encompasses the following components: (1) updating existing or developing new social and environmental instruments to ensure full compliance with the World Bank's social and environmental standards; (2) executing construction works, including the erection of flood-protection structures, the power plant's water-intake tunnels, and necessary facilities in both the upstream and downstream areas. To address technical issues and ensure rigorous oversight, a specialized commission, composed of leading dam-safety experts, has been established.

The following projects are currently implemented: (1) [Dushanbe Water Supply and Wastewater Project](#) aimed at substantially improving the quality of services. Key achievements under this project include the installation of 40,000 household meters and the construction of 70 km of water supply pipelines and 24 km of sewer networks; (2) [Agricultural Sector Project for Tajikistan](#) designed to enhance agricultural resilience, with the objective of reducing food shortages and generating 60,000 jobs by 2027; (3) [Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project](#), which is currently advancing major construction works for the Vakhsh inter-district water supply infrastructure.

#### Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan remains heavily reliant on fossil fuels to satisfy its energy needs, presenting substantial opportunities for national decarbonization. The World Bank is actively supporting the country's participation in regional initiatives that are specifically designed to enhance and streamline processes related to water and energy resource management.

#### Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan, together with Tajikistan, plans to construct two hydropower plants on the Zeravshan River with a combined capacity of 320 MW, and is also participating in regional initiatives, including the

Kambarata project. Uzbekistan has additionally signed agreements with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to explore the potential for joint electricity exports (see below).

### Regional

According to World Bank estimates, expanding renewable energy production and modernizing national and regional power grids will require at least \$20 billion over the next 5-10 years.

Central Asian countries are increasingly recognizing the benefits of regional energy integration, and several multilateral initiatives are now under negotiation. **Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan** signed a Memorandum of Understanding on exporting renewable energy, including the

construction of a submarine cable across the Caspian Sea to supply electricity to the EU (Tashkent, 1 May). Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan concluded a Cooperation Agreement on the construction of the Kambarata-1 HPP during the International Energy Investment Forum (Vienna, June). A Coordination Donor Committee involving the World Bank, ADB, EBRD, the OPEC Fund, and other partners has been established to coordinate donors' support for the hydropower plant.

These initiatives are crucial for addressing the interconnected challenges of water and energy security, optimizing resource use, and strengthening regional cooperation in support of sustainable development.

*Source:* World Bank, [CAWEP Annual Report: Phase 4](#)