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Green Central Asia
Enhancing environment, climate and water resilience

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Green Central Asia: Newsletter

Start of mutually beneficial water and energy cooperation

The first meeting of the regional working group to discuss a mutually beneficial water-energy cooperation mechanism was held online on May 19, 2022.

«Green Central Asia» gathered the members of the working group appointed from each Central Asian country (representatives of the Central Asian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, relevant line ministries, and government agencies/committees).

There was an interesting exchange of perspectives on finding solutions to strengthen water-energy cooperation and security in the Central Asian region.

The Central Asian representatives expressed their readiness to cooperate in the development of a regional document with recommendations and proposals to support a mutually beneficial water-energy cooperation mechanism, which will be submitted to decision-makers for further consideration. National experts are going to be involved in supporting. The next meeting of the regional working group is planned to be convened September in an extended offline format in one of the Central Asian partner countries.

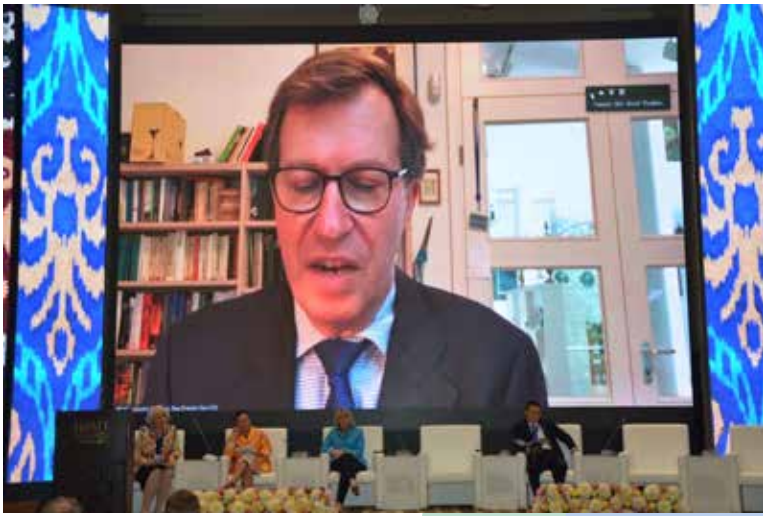
Topic of the day at the Water Forum: Water, Environment and Resilience to Climate Change

Green Central Asia, together with the European Commission held a panel session on water, environment, and climate resilience.

The session was organized within the framework of the «CENTRAL ASIA FORUM - WATER FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION» as part of the Second Decade of Water Action Conference on June 6, 2022, in Dushanbe.

The panel session discussed water diplomacy and climate change-sensitive transboundary water and environmental cooperation in Central Asia, opportunities for public and private investments, specific needs, and contributions to water and energy cooperation in Central Asia, sustainable use of water and other natural resources, and water-related disaster risk reduction. Particular emphasis was also placed on the necessary commitments from Central Asian partner countries and international stakeholders in the region.

More than 80 specialists and representatives of CA countries attended the session. The panel was opened by H.E. Ms. Terhi Hakala, European Union Special Representative for Central Asia and Ambassador Dr. H. Thölken, Special Advisor for International Climate and Energy Policy at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. Representatives of the EU, Italy, Germany, Kazakhstan,WB,SDC, GIZ and IWMI spoke in the panel, which was moderated by the GCA programme manager.



Key Messages

Strengthening the regional cooperation and management of water, energy and environmental resources in Central Asia is essential for climate change mitigation and adaptation

Targeted investments for a regionally integrated green energy transition are crucial for sustainable development in Central Asia

Enhanced coordination between donors and development partners and alignment with government strategies can help address the challenges in the water, energy, and environmental sectors in the context of climate change

Next steps and partnerships

- Launch of a new Regional Team Europe Initiative on water, energy and climate change in Central Asia to promote a sustainable and equitable green transition
- Mutual support between Green Central Asia and the Regional Team Europe Initiative, as well as partnership with other regional programs and stakeholders to create synergies and avoid duplication
- Continuation of existing coordination mechanisms between donors and development partners, involving Central Asian governments and regional organizations

30 Years Together: Central Asia and Germany

From June 25 to July 2, 2022, a Study Tour to Germany was organized for heads of departments and/or divisions as well as chief specialists from the Foreign Ministries, Environment and Water Ministries/ Hydrometeorological Services of the five Central Asian partner countries. The trip was arranged to exchange expierience and best practices in light of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Central Asia.

An entire day with the German Federal Foreign Office

The delegation met with Mr. Matthias Lüttenberg, Director for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Dr. Hinrich Thölken, Special Advisor for International Climate and Energy Policy at the German Federal Foreign Office for a joint lunch. In a friendly atmosphere, climate foreign policy was discussed as well as important aspects and features of cooperation with Central Asian countries in the field of natural resources management.

The delegation visited Division 409 International Environmental Policy, Water Diplomacy and Urban Diplomacy, and was greeted by Mr. Achim Schkade, Head of the Division, and his colleagues from Division 408, responsible for climate finance issues.

An exhibition dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Central Asia, organized in the hall of the Foreign Office, was of particular interest to the delegation.

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Climate Change Adaptation in practice: Information exchange and Q&A sessions at the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action

A very interesting time for the delegation was spent at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, where Ms. Birgit Hofmann, Head of the Division «Alternative Driving Technologies, Electromobility, Environmental Innovations» had prepared, together with her colleagues, a varied programme for the guests from Central Asia with contributions on electro mobility, green hydrogen and efficient natural resources management.

Electro mobility as a key element of climate-friendly industrial, transport, and energy policies was discussed in detail. Ms. Hofmann explained how Germany is boosting the demand for electric vehicles by for instance taxation advantages for staff cars and purchase premia; battery cell production and the involvement of business, industry and research were thematised.
Dr. Axel Bree of the Division on Funding Programs for Decarbonization of Industry, Climate Protection Agreements gave a detailed overview on German hydrogen policies and explained the National Hydrogen Strategy as it was developed in 2020 for Germany.
A detailed discussion ensued on the possibility of cooperation on green hydrogen between Central Asia and Germany.

Dr. Sven-Uwe Schulz of the German Raw Materials Agency (DERA) within the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resource under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action briefed the delegation on the activities and data analyses concerning all sorts of raw materials for Germany that his agency is doing. In a Q&A session the delegation asked many questions on data collection and analysis and cooperation mechanisms.

Avoiding waste is the best solution – info exchange with the Federal Association of the German Waste Management, Water and Circular Economy (BDE)

A warm welcome was given to the study tour participants at the Federal Association of the German Waste Management, Water and Circular Economy (BDE), which was founded in 1961 and is the industry association of the German waste disposal, water and recycling management. The member companies of the BDE represent the entire value chain of recycling and resource management.

Mr. Bernhard Schodrowski, Director Communication and Public Relations introduced the work of the BDE. In Germany, approximately every year 414 million tons of waste are produced. The BDE therefore works with its members on avoiding, up-scaling, recycling, thermal use and storing of waste materials. How this is done was illustrated with several examples. In addition, the delegation was introduced to the European Green Deal and what it means. The very informative presentation was also shared with the participants, considering the regional action plan of Green Central Asia foreseeing also a working group on managing e-waste.

Economic development perspectives for rural areas – a visit to the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture

The Central Asian delegation also visited the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and was received by Sebastian Graf von Keyserlingk, Head of Division International Trade Policy and Ms. Peggy Lantzsch of the Division Eastern Europe, Central and East Asia, EU Enlargement and several other colleagues. They briefed the delegation on German policies concerning climate protection, food security and the implementation of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) as well as on economic perspectives for rural areas. Germany has already an agrarian dialogue with Kazakhstan ongoing and is beginning now one with Uzbekistan. In these bilateral dialogues on sustainable agriculture and the integration of the economy in agriculture ministry representatives, parliamentarians, scientists and civil society meet to exchange their experiences. In a lively discussion the topics of smart agriculture, organic farming, agriculture financing, combatting drought in agriculture and productivity improvement were debated. In the aftermath, the German ministry representatives shared a lot of information available online that was forwarded to the study tour participants.

What does science say?

The participants had the opportunity to visit the partner organizations of the Green Central Asia Initiative, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Change Research (PIK) and the Helmholtz-Potsdam - German Research Center for Geosciences (GFZ). The Scientists spoke in detail about the climate change in Central Asia and what necessary urgent actions need to be undertaken to adapt to climate change.

As part of a small cultural programme the participants visited Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam and the New Museum in Berlin.

Dialogue and close cooperation: Meeting the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ms. Dinara Kemelova

On July 15, 2022, in Bishkek Dr. Caroline Milow, Programme Manager of Green Central Asia met with Ms. Dinara Kemelova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic.

During the meeting, the parties exchanged views on the realization of the German Federal Foreign Office Initiative, including the regional projects implemented in its framework such as climate change adaptation, monitoring and modeling of glaciers, discussion of mutually beneficial water and energy mechanism and the climate risk management project. Dr. Milow also informed about a forthcoming new Regional Climate Sensitive Water Management Project commissioned by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Cooperation, which is planned to be launched in 2023.

Ms. Kemelova noted the importance of the Green Central Asia initiative implementation in the context of climate change and the readiness of the Kyrgyz side for further cooperation within the framework of this initiative, with a particular focus on achieving practical and tangible results.

The sides agreed to maintain an active dialogue and close cooperation within the framework of the Green Central Asia initiative.

What next: Central Asian countries in the fight against climate change

To further develop a common regional document on adaptation to climate change in Central Asia, the Regional Working Group (RWG) established within the framework of the Green Central Asia Initiative met again in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on July 7, 2022. Representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and relevant line ministries and state agencies/committees of the Central Asian countries discussed the draft concept of the regional document, title, format and structure of the future document.

All country representatives decided to title the document «Regional Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change in Central Asia», which contains an introductory part and a mandatory section of measures. Special attention was paid to issues of financing of the planned activities.

Next steps: International and national experts will continue working on the Strategy content development according to the structure discussed and approved by the Regional Working Group.

Drought forecasting

Tashkent hosted the first regional seminar to discuss the development of the drought monitoring tool for the Aral Sea Basin from 18 to 20 July 2022.

Green Central Asia aims to create an early drought warning system for the Aral Sea Basin (ASB) in Central Asia that optimizes the analysis of drought problems and provides various tools for decision-making by government agencies. During the seminar, basic concepts, first results, validation strategies, and design questions of the tool were presented and discussed. The participants provided feedback on the implications of the implementation in the different countries of the region.

The seminar was held by scientists of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany, Prof. Dr. Christopher Conrad, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Matthias Völkel and student assistants, representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research CASIB (Central Asia Sustainable Innovation Bureau) office in Almaty Dr. Peter Liebelt, and GFZ Potsdam, Germany, Dr. Abror Gafurov. Central Asia was represented by the Hydrometeorological Services of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

PIK news

On May 25, PIK hosted an one-day event for representatives from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan within their Study Tour to Germany «GIS and Remote Sensing Training». The event was part of GIZ Regional Project «Ecologically Oriented Regional Development in the Aral Sea Region» (ECO-ARAL), with the support of Reiner Lemoine Institute.

Researchers from PIK presented several talks about science in Germany, challenges with regards to climate change and their work in the Central Asian region within the Green Central Asia Initiative.

The event was followed up by a general discussion where participants from 13 different organizations discussed the problem of climate change in the region and possible adaptation and mitigation approaches that could be implemented as part of future collaboration.

Open global data sources in climate and hydrology workshop

From May 31 to June 2, PIK team conducted the workshop on «Open global data sources in climate and hydrology» for master's students at the National University of Uzbekistan (NUU) in Tashkent. The main goal of the workshop was to present different open global databases that are relevant to the Central Asian region and can be useful for everyone who works in the climate or hydrological field.

The IPCC WGI Interactive Atlas was demonstrated where students could analyse tera-bytes of the CMIP6 model outputs as well as a new interactive web platform developed by PIK (http://climateimpactsonline.com). This platform shows possible climate change impacts on different sectors in various regions across the world. Recently, the Central Asian Region was added as an additional focus region for two sectors: climate and agriculture.

With this platform, students could analyse how climate would change under different scenarios at national and regional level by the end of the century.

Hydromodelling 2022

From 4 to 15 July the workshop on hydrological modelling («PIK Hydromodelling 2022») was conducted in Potsdam. The representatives from research institutions and hydromets of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in the two week-long intensive training at PIK.

The program of the workshop was dedicated to hydrological modelling and climate impact assessment, and covered different aspects of modelling, data processing and data analysis with a focus on the Central Asian region. During the workshop participants learned how to work with the Soil and Water Integrated Model, downloaded and manipulated climate scenarios and applied different visualization techniques.

In addition, the workshop was a good opportunity to summarize the results of the remote collaboration on hydrological modelling for the last year. New results, obtained during the practical exercises, will be developed further and submitted to one of the scientific journals by the end of the year as part of a joint publication with workshop participants.

DKU news
IWRM master program

"The right choice of university is the first step to a successful career"
Sharif Makhmudov (graduate of 2018 of IWRM master program)

The master program on Integrated Water Resources Management was launched in 2011; since then, 120 students have successfully graduated and contributed to various organizations and ministries.

This year, there are 48 applications from all Central Asian countries for the master program. In the frame of the master program the students are involved in different capacity building projects.

On April 26-27, 2022, Turkestan hosted a scientific and practical conference «30 years of Central Asian countries' water cooperation: confidently looking to the future» organized by the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Within the framework of the conference, a youth session «Youth for Water and Peace» was held, organized by the German-Kazakh University and UNESCO Chair on Integrated Water Resources Management in Central Asia.

The purpose of the event was to involve young people in water resources management and ecology in Central Asia by creating an additional platform for a broader discussion of world experience, advanced scientific solutions to hardships of the water and environmental sectors that contributed to the sustainable development of the academic sector in Central Asian countries.

Both events were attended by overall 35 participants, including Alumni, current students and DKU partners.

The Youth Session and International Conference strengthened cooperation in the academic sector and opened up new opportunities for young specialists in science. It ensured open access to data, research integrity, knowledge sharing, guaranteeing benefits for the development of science and society in Central Asian countries.

DKU supports ‘Olympic games’ in Central Asia «Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia»

From February to June of 2022, the competitions were held in the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, with a total number of 90 registered participants. These competitions have been held since 2014 in each Central Asia country with the support of international organizations and partner universities.

These competitions are held at 2 levels: national and regional.

- The first level (national) is carried out at the discretion of national ministries and the scientific community (academies and universities) to identify the most talented young professionals who in the future will be included in the personnel reserve of the authorized ministry / agency.

  The National IWRM Competition among students is held separately in each country of Central Asia and Afghanistan by partner universities of DKU Competition. This level is divided into two stages: written (closed test) and oral (open test questions).

- The second level (regional) is carried out by KNU in Almaty with a system for evaluating results based on agreement with the Free University of Berlin.

  The experience of holding the Competitions on an annual basis shows that more and more universities are ready for partnership and cooperation with the DKU in organizing water ‘Olympic games’. This ensures the recognition of both the network and its partners in the region, as well as more information about other activities and projects that the Institute is carrying out. Forging this connection with students who will become future network support leaders is a good chance to make all actions more sustainable.

Renewable energy trip 2022: facilities in Kazakhstan

From June 20 to 26, 2022 with the assistance of the Kazakh Ministry of Energy, the support of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Renewable Energy Association «Qazaq Green» and other partners conducted an educational trip to study best practices of using renewable energy «The Renewable Energy Trip 2022».

The main purpose of the trip was to visit renewable energy facilities in Kazakhstan, which allowed students/ undergraduates/researchers to study solar, wind and hydroelectric power plants in practice, better understand their technical and technological features, discuss existing challenges and opportunities for the introduction of new renewable energy resources.

Participants had the unique opportunity to apply this gained knowledge for their own research and then to prepare a description of stations as examples of best practices for using renewable energy sources.

Network creation for young professionals in Central Asia

The German-Kazakh University gathered 20 participants at the 8th CAWa Green Summer School within Green Central Asia in the period from July 11 to 20, 2022. The provided complex interdisciplinary knowledge (including modern theories and approaches in the field of remote sensing, machine learning, GIS platforms, modeling, and visualization of different scenarios), and their practical application to solve certain environmental and climatic problems in Central Asia.

The students studied the data management features on climate change, the best world practices in the use of programs and technologies for the development of the territories of Central Asia as well as analysis of meteorological features in Central Asia.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SEPTEMBER

September 20	Meeting of Representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Members of Parliaments of Central Asian Countries on Climate Change, (Green Central Asia-CAREC), Almaty
September 20	3rd EC IFAS Donor Coordination Meeting, Tashkent
September 23	Team Europe Initiative Working Group Meeting
September 26-28	Glacier Monitoring Regional Experts Working Group Meeting, (Green Central Asia), Tashkent
September 27	National Policy Dialogue, Uzbekistan, (EU-UNECE), Tashkent

OCTOBER

October 18-19	CASIB Regional Stakeholder Conference 2022; Green Innovations for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Central Asia, Tashkent
October 18-19	Regional Working Group meeting on Climate Change Adaptation, (Green Central Asia), Tashkent
October 20	Regional Dialogue on coordination and cooperation on transboundary protected areas in Central Asia, (Green Central Asia), Tashkent
October 24-27	30 years diplomatic relations Germany – Central Asia: Youth Conference, (GIZ-OSCE), Bishkek
TBC	Workshop on Regional Climate Change Impact for Journalists, (Green Central Asia-PIK), Almaty
TBC	Environmental Peacebuilding Workshop, (Green Central Asia-PIK), Almaty

NOVEMBER

November 1-4	Cryosphere and related hazards in High Mountain Asia in a changing climate, (UNESCO), Almaty
TBC	Two-month research visit from DKU, (Green Central Asia-PIK, DKU), Potsdam
TBC	Glacier Monitoring Regional Experts Working Group Meeting, (Green Central Asia), Tashkent

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