german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by:

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Green Central Asia
Enhancing environment, climate and water resilience

ISSUE
No. 1 [4]
May 2023

Green Central Asia: Newsletter

Showcasing best practice for cooperation in the field of monitoring, assessment and exchange of information on water resources

On February 1-2, 2023 in Astana, the Regional Workshop on Monitoring, Assessment and Information Sharing in Transboundary Basins in Central Asia gathered experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, representing state bodies and national services responsible for water resources, the environment and hydrometeorology, as well as specialists from scientific institutions (eg. Environment Agency of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia), basin water management organisations (INBO, International Sava River Basin Commission), and representatives of international organisations (WMO, OSCE, FAO, USAID, SDC and others).

The regional workshop was organised jointly with the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to assist countries in studying international experience in monitoring, assessing and sharing information in transboundary basins and discussing the possibilities of strengthening cooperation between the countries of Central Asia in the field of protection and use of water resources in transboundary basins.

Participants had the opportunity to review various practices and approaches to monitoring, assessing and sharing of information in transboundary basins, including the use of consistent and comparable assessment methods, development of data management systems, implementation of unified data reporting procedures, etc. The experts also discussed proposals for the publication "Good Practices and Lessons Learned in the Field of Transboundary Data Exchange" developed in the framework of the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

“The Silk Road of Knowledge: Science Meets Green Policy” - 2023

The Online International Conference “The Silk Road of Knowledge: Science Meets Green Policy” was held on February 22-24, 2023. The Green Central Asia team actively participated in panel discussions as well as in thematic sessions.

Discussions evolved around the question on how to bridge the gap between science, education, and political practice. The conference raised very important topics for Central Asia such as:

- Innovations in adaptation and mitigation methods of climate change in the water sector of Central Asia
- Ensuring Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development.
- Sustainable land management under climate change
- Water diplomacy
- Empowering women in the energy sector in Central Asia
- Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Rangelands Management in Central Asia

About 100 young environmental scientists and students participated in the scientific exchange in order to respond to Central Asian political and economic demands.

For more information, please visit the conference website: http://srkc.dku.kz/

Green Central Asia at the EU-Central Asia Ministerial Conference in Rome

The Seventh EU–Central Asia High Level Conference on 23-24 February gathered the representatives of the Governments of the Central Asian countries, of the European Union and the EU Member States responsible for the environment, climate change and water policies, international, regional and non-governmental organisations in Rome, Italy. The Green Central Asia Team supported the participation of partners in the Conference, which was organised under the EU–Central Asia Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation and took place at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the second day of the Conference, Dr Caroline Milow presented Green Central Asia Initiative within German and International Cooperation in the Region at Session 5: International Institutions and bilateral donors: opportunities and perspectives for regional activities and green investments in Central Asia.

The Conference was aimed at:

- Presenting the results of the activities of the EU–CA Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation and its Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (WGECC) since January 2019.
- Discussing and agreeing on practical steps for enhancing policy dialogue and capacity development in the field of environment, climate change and water in Central Asia.
- Identifying priority areas for the EU–CA Platform for 2023-2025.

Outputs of the conference you can find here: https://wecoop.eu/events/7-high-level-conference/

Meeting in the Ministry of Mining and Geology of the Republic of Uzbekistan

On March 1, the Green Central Asia GIZ Programme Manager met with Mr. A.A. Kadirhodjaev, Deputy Minister of Mining and Geology of the Republic of Uzbekistan to discuss issues of groundwater monitoring and the platform for further improvement of the platform http://waterbase.uz/ and introduction of Visual MODFLOW software for groundwater modelling. The meeting was attended by the Director of State Unitary Enterprise Uzbekhydrogeology, Mr. M. Tashpulatov, as well as the Head of the State Groundwater Monitoring Service, Mr. B. Aitmetov.

Green Central Asia in Turkmenistan

Dr. Caroline Milow, Programme Manager and Mr. Alexandr Nikolayenko, Regional Advisor visited Turkmenistan from 5 to 10 March 2023. During the visit, a series of official meetings were held with Turkmen partners, namely, with the Heads of Division of the following ministries: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Committee of Water Resources of Turkmenistan, Ministry of Agriculture and Nature Protection, as well as Hydrometeorology Service of Turkmenistan.

The main goal of the meetings was to discuss the ongoing GCA activities in the region as well as to consider new perspectives for future cooperation in the framework of new upcoming GIZ projects. It was also highlighted that the Green Central Asia is a platform designed to provide scope for enhanced coordination of green German activities in the region of Central Asia and that GIZ is focusing to propose integrated solutions. In this context, new projects to be planned for CA region will be looking at comprehensive approaches. Dr. Caroline Milow informed Turkmen partners about two new upcoming GIZ Regional Projects to be implemented within the framework of GCA Initiative with a focus on tackling climate change issues: "Climate-sensitive Water Resources Management in Central Asia" and "Climate Risk Management". Both projects embrace the five CA countries and are commissioned by BMZ.

As a result of the meetings, representatives of the relevant ministries thanked GIZ for fruitful cooperation and the information provided and expressed their interest and readiness for further cooperation.

Green Central Asia participated at the Conference "Cooperation on Food Security in the Context of Climate Change" organised by the Turkmen Government and FAO on 10 March

Green Central Asia Initiative supported the Signing of the Joint Memorandum on Glacier Monitoring and Modelling

On March 17, 2023 the Regional Working Group on Glacier Monitoring and Modelling gathered in Tashkent. At this meeting, Central Asian Heads of Authorities signed a joint memorandum of cooperation between the following organisations: Central Asian Regional Glaciological Center under the auspices of UNESCO (Kazakhstan); Tien Shan Alpine Scientific Center at the Institute of Water Problems and Hydropower of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic; Central Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences (Kyrgyz Republic); State Scientific Institution "Center for Research of Glaciers at the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan"; Agency for Hydrometeorology of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; Center of Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Institute of Geology and Geophysics named after H.M. Abdullayev of the University of Geological Sciences under the Ministry of Mining Industry and Geology of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

This Memorandum provides a solid basis for developing and agreeing on a common regional methodology for glacier monitoring, assessment and forecasting to strengthen regional coordination and to address existing shortcomings in determining and forecasting precipitation, snow cover and glaciers` behaviour, as well as the development of a common approach for research and for the elaboration of appropriate models in the Central Asian Region.

Contribution of Green Central Asia to the UN Conference in New York

On March 22-24, the UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Goals of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018–2028" was held at the UN Headquarters in New York. King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon acted as co-chairs. The Conference was attended by 7 heads of state and government, vice-presidents, vice-prime-ministers and more than 70 ministers responsible for the implementation of water policy. Within the framework of the Conference, 5 interactive high-level dialogues and more than 30 side events on various topics were organised. The UN Water Conference became a unique opportunity to accelerate progress towards universal access to safe water and sanitation by 2030. The outcome of this Conference was the adoption of the Water Resources Action Programme. (https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2023/action-agenda) The document defines the need to reduce the pressure on the hydrological system and take right decisions and prepare sound policies in the field of water management. The GIZ Green Central Asia Programme supported the partners of the Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in participating in this conference.

Source: https://enb.iisd.org/un-2023-water-conference-22mar2023

The 9th Meeting of Foreign Ministries and Parliamentarians of Central Asia: preparations for UNFCCC COP-28

On 19 April, Tashkent hosted the ninth meeting of representatives of foreign ministries and parliamentarians of Central Asian countries on climate change, organised by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) with the support of 'Green Central Asia'.

The representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Parliaments of Central Asia, national UNFCCC focal points, and representatives of international organisations and diplomatic missions accredited in Uzbekistan very actively participated in this ninth meeting.

Participants discussed issues of enhancing regional and international cooperation and preparations for the COP-28 including a regional statement of the Central Asian countries. Particular attention was paid to new initiatives and projects in the region. The participants showed great interest in the introduction of the draft regional climate change adaptation strategy and the country representatives voiced their opinions and suggestions; the majority of comments was very positive and supportive. All five Central Asian countries supported the draft Strategy. Participants also shared experiences on climate change adaptation and mitigation legislation, institutional frameworks and implementation of climate policies in CA countries; progress was noted in implementing climate change commitments.

We are pleased to inform you that Green Central Asia has received a letter of appreciation from the Environmental Commission of the Parliament of the Republic of Tajikistan for supporting meetings of parliamentarians

7 questions to the expert

POTSDAM INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE IMPACT RESEARCH (PIK)

Advancing the scientific frontier on inter-disciplinary climate impact research for global sustainability and contributing knowledge and solutions for a safe and just climate future

Dr. Iulii Didovets

Postdoctoral Researcher
Project Lead
Department
Climate Resilience
Working Group
Hydroclimatic Risks
Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)
P.O. Box 60 12 03
14412 Potsdam
Germany

Phone: +49 (0)331 288 2406
Email: didovets@pik-potsdam.de
www.pik-potsdam.de

Dr Iulii Didovets is a PostDoc researcher at the Climate Resilience department and a Project Lead of the Green Vision Central Asia and CWEH Uzbekistan projects at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. His area of interest and professional experience covers hydrological modelling, extremes, climate change and GIS. Iulii develops his knowledge working in projects on Europe, Africa and Central Asia, where he also expands his expertise in capacity building, teaching and assessment of climate impacts.

What do you answer someone who denies climate change?

First of all, it's important to acknowledge that people may reject new information that conflicts with their beliefs, contradicting political ideology or personal perception of climate at the local scale. However, the climate change it's not a theory but the reality in which we are living now. The cumulative scientific consensus supports that climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in global action on adaptation or mitigation will fail the global opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all. So, we need to act right now!

Initial assessments at the UN climate summit were disappointing. "We are on the highway to climate hell" (UN Secretary General António Guterres). If you could order political decision makers of the world concerning climate and water availability – What would be your first order for them?

I think it is important to prioritize the establishment of effective transboundary arrangements and regionally integrated institutional frameworks to address climate change impacts on water resources. Additionally, it is crucial to address the lack of collective willingness, especially at the regional and national levels to take an action and overcome political barriers to climate adaptation planning.

You are a scientist: if you could wish something from policy makers – What would it be?

I´d wish to address the challenges of climate change and promote sustainable development more effectively. In this regard it is needed to strengthen international cooperation between science and policy makers to develop possible pathways across disciplines on more sustainable and long-term basis focusing on different regions.

Water availability in Central Asia is most affected by climate change. You are working on forecast models. Please explain in simple words how a forecast model works and how this knowledge helps us?

A model is a mathematical simplified representation of the real-world processes that helps us predict future conditions based on historical data and different scenarios. In the context of water availability, hydrological models consider various factors such as precipitation, temperature, soils, glacier and human activities, e.g. water use. By simulating these processes in combination with different scenarios of future development, models can project water availability and potential water stress in future. Such kind of knowledge helps us to understand the possible impacts of climate change and following risks. This information is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to develop effective water management strategies for adaptation.

Which website is the first one you open in the morning?

Every morning, like many Ukrainians, I check for updates on what happened overnight in my home country. My go-to website for this is www.babel.ua. Also, I enjoy reading analytical articles on www.economist.com.

Which book is the one that most moved you and you recommend our readers?

I would recommend to read "Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet" by Prof. Johan Rockström and Owen Gaffney

What is your favorite movie?

It's hard to say but recently I was impressed by "14 Peaks: Nothing Is Impossible" and "The Salt of the Earth"

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

May 3-5, Second Regional Workshop on Drought Forecasting Tool (Drought map ASP), organized by Prof. Dr. Christopher Conrad and his team from the Martin Luther University Halle Wittenberg, Tashkent
May 25-26, Subregional Workshop on Mine Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Central Asia, Dushanbe (in partnership with UNECE)

June 1-2, International Workshop Aarhus Convention: Effective Public Participation for Good Governance, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Development (in partnership with the UNECE), Tashkent
June 6-7, GCA input to Session 4: Inter-Basin Dialogue (in cooperation with SDC) Policy and Science Dialogue as part of the international conference Central Asia: Towards Sustainable Future Through Strong Regional Institution, Dushanbe
June 22, Regional Seminar Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity Utilization and Conservation from Saline Marginal Lands in the Aral Sea Basin, Tashkent

July 4-5, Fourth Meeting of the Regional Working Group on the Development of a Regional Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change in Central Asia, Almaty

August 19-29, First Joint Regional Expedition to Study Glaciers, Almaty (with participation of 8 scientific centers of Central Asia)

Published by:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Green Central Asia: Transboundary dialogue on climate, environment and security in Central Asia and Afghanistan
Address: 100128 Uzbekistan, Tashkent,
401 Labzak 1A, 4th floor
T. +998 71 241 40 48
www.giz.de / www.greencentralasia.org

Design: Mukhabbat Kamalova, Tashkent

Photo credits: GIZ

Cover pictures: Tashkent by Nilufar Fayzimurodova GIZ

Authors:

On behalf of: German Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)
Division 408: Climate change geopolitics, climate and security, water diplomacy

In cooperation with:

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication