

Feasibility Study



Co-Implementation of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (RCCAS) in Central Asia

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RCCAS Feasibility Study

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List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASBP4	Aral Sea Basin Program-4
CACCC	Central Asia Climate Change Conference
CACIP	Information portal on climate adaptation and mitigation in Central Asia
CAREC Institute	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute
CAREC Eco	Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDCPIII	GIZ “Capacity development for climate policy in the countries of South-East and Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Phase III” project
CLI	Collective Leadership Institute
COP	Conference of Parties
DCM	Dialogic Change Model
DKU	German-Kazakh University
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GCA	GIZ “Green Central Asia” Initiative
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (German federal enterprise for international cooperation)
ICAT	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency
ICSD	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development
ICWC	Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia
IKI	International Climate Initiative
IFAS	International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
IRWG	Inter-Ministerial Regional Working Group
LT-LEDs	Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NC	National Communications
NCCAS	National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2030 of the Republic of Tajikistan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RCCAS	Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Central Asia
RAP	Regional Action Plan

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RCOY	Regional Climate Change Conference of Youth endorsed by YOUNGO
REP4SD-CA	Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia
ROGS	Regional Ocean Governance Strategy
RSC	Regional Stewardship Council
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TIIAME	Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers
TWG	Technical Working Group
YOUNGO	Official children and youth constituency of UNFCCC
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WIO	Western Indian Ocean

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1. Acknowledgements

In preparing this Feasibility Study, the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI) is grateful for having had the privilege to interact directly with over 200 climate actors in Central Asia. Their inputs in consultations and dialogues during CLI's Engagement Mission form the basis for this Study. Members of the GIZ Green Central Asia (GCA) program team made the Engagement Mission possible and we appreciate the care and commitment with which they approach their work. Colleagues from the GIZ program "Capacity Development for Climate Policy in the Countries of South East, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Phase III" (CDCPIII)¹ worked closely with us from the beginning to the end of this process, offering essential guidance that helped ensure the utility of this Study. Finally, in presenting the Study to the German Federal Foreign Office (AA), we appreciated the future-oriented discussion and openness to shared responsibility for ambitious climate action in the region.

It has been a privilege to work on this Study and we earnestly hope that observations and recommendations we have made may help inspire continued, strategic action for the climate and people of Central Asia.

¹ This project is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI), which is one of the key instruments of the German Federal Government to support international climate action and biodiversity. IKI supports strategies in developing and emerging countries that seek to achieve sustainable change. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and the German Federal Foreign Office (AA) support this initiative on the basis of a decision adopted by the German Bundestag. For more information: www.international-climate-initiative.com

2. Executive Summary

a. Framing: Partner and donor roles in RCCAS co-development

An Inter-Ministerial Regional Working Group (IRWG), convened by the GIZ Green Central Asia (GCA) program, co-developed the [Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Central Asia](#) (RCCAS or “the Strategy”). The IRWG includes representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ecology, Water, Emergency Situations and other interested institutions of all Central Asian countries. International and national experts supported the drafting of the Strategy, which was presented at the UNFCCC COP 28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in December 2023 and approved by all Central Asian governments.

The Strategy espouses the long-term Vision that:

- “By 2030, the Central Asian countries will improve climate resilience and minimize vulnerability to climate impacts in line with the Paris Agreement through a ‘better together’ approach”

The Strategy’s Overall Goal is to:

- “Develop a mechanism for cooperation between the Central Asian countries to overcome the negative effects of climate change and to implement adaptation measures.”

This overall goal is meant to be advanced through four Strategic Objectives, namely:

1. “Strengthen regional coordination for climate change”
2. “Create mechanisms for the development and implementation of adaptation projects/programs and attraction of financing”
3. “Improve adaptive capacity through accumulation and sharing of knowledge and scientific cooperation”
4. “Develop climate monitoring, information exchange, and forecasting systems”

Prior to development and agreement of the first implementation plan of the RCCAS, the [Regional Action Plan for Joint Political Dialogue on Climate, Environment and Security](#) is intended to be used as an initial Regional Action Plan (RAP) until 2025, focusing on its four Joint Regional Priorities:

1. “Climate Change Impact on Regional Water Resources Management”
2. “Climate Change Impact on Land Management”
3. “Cooperation in and contribution to international instruments”
4. “Waste Management”

The RAP is intended to be adapted and renewed every 3 years. *Please see Annex 1 for a slide set prepared by GCA on the RCCAS development process and key content (Milow, June 2023).*

The Collective Leadership Institute (CLI), responding to a request of the German Federal Foreign Office (AA) and assigned by the GIZ program “Capacity Development for Climate Policy in the Countries of South East, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Phase III” (CDCPIII), **designed and conducted a participatory consultation and dialogue process - an Engagement Mission - to collect key content for a “Feasibility Study for the Continuation of Support for the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Central Asia” (RCCAS).** The Feasibility Study assesses the RCCAS and outlines potential future directions for its implementation.

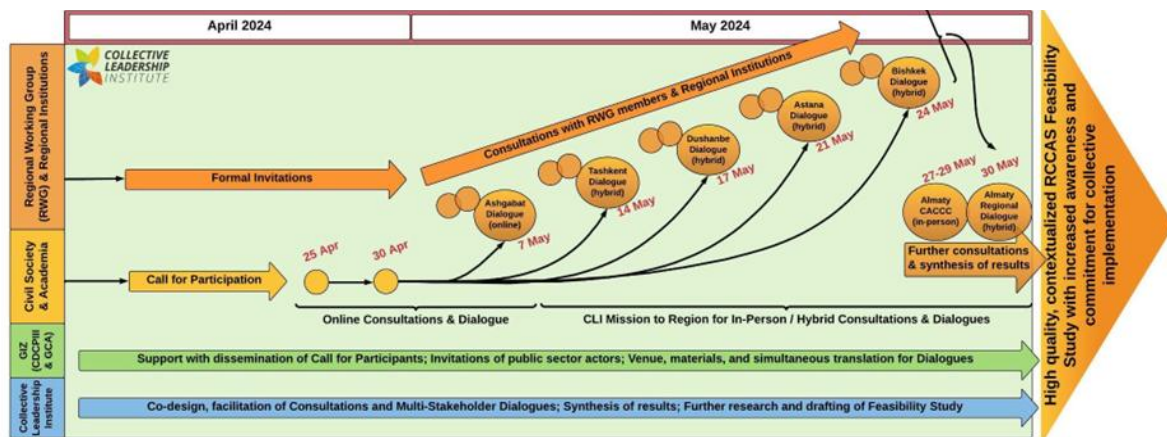
b. Approach: Overarching goals for desk study and engagement mission

This Feasibility Study is informed by desk research and an engagement mission to Central Asia with the following overarching goals:

- **Relational goal:** Identify and convene multi-stakeholder actors to increase understanding of the RCCAS and trust for regional action on climate change adaptation
- **Process goal:** Engage involved actors in a respectful, inclusive, and empowering manner that helps build their commitment for collectively implementing the RCCAS
- **Operational goal:** Co-develop a high quality and contextualised Feasibility Study to support co-implementation of the RCCAS

In order to raise awareness among and more fully invite new actors into the RCCAS process, online-consultations were held with civil society and academia in advance of 5 country-specific, multi-stakeholder dialogues, a culminating regional-level dialogue following the annual Central Asia Climate Change Conference (CACCC) in Almaty, Kazakhstan in May 2024, and a development partner consultation in July 2024. In total, over 200 individuals participated in the Engagement Mission, visualised in this **process architecture**:

Fig. 1: Process Architecture: Stakeholder Consultations and Dialogues for Feasibility Study on the Co-Implementation of the RCCAS for Central Asia



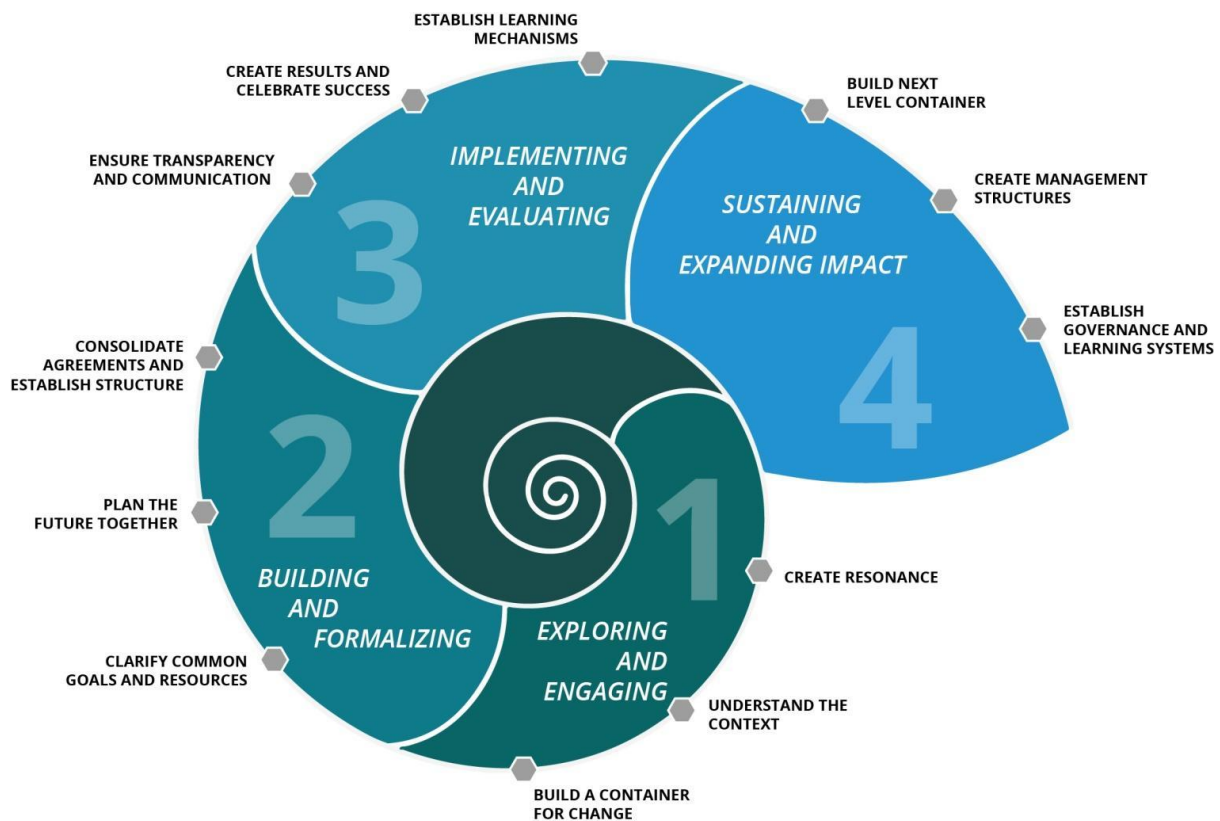
Based on the analysis of participant feedback, the relational and process goals were successfully fulfilled through the Engagement Mission. Please see the Annex 2 for a full documentation report on the Engagement Mission. Results from both the Engagement Mission (indicated with an icon of people around a table) and the Desk Study (indicated with an icon of a desk) are integrated in the remainder of this Feasibility Study, fulfilling the operational goal.

English and Russian versions of this Feasibility Study were published and shared with all involved actors in Central Asia, in the hope of stimulating further discussion, adaptation to the Central Asian context, and multi-stakeholder climate action.

c. High level process recommendations in the Dialogic Change Model

This Feasibility Study structures observations and recommendations for RCCAS co-implementation using the Collective Leadership Institute's [Dialogic Change Model](#) © (DCM), shown in the figure below.

Fig. 2: The Dialogic Change Model ©



The DCM is a process-focused model in four iterative phases, **designed to help guide complex, multi-stakeholder change.**

- **Phase 1, Exploring and Engaging**, is about raising awareness, interest, and energy for collaborative change and preparing stakeholders for collaboration.
- **Phase 2, Building and Formalizing**, is about consolidating the system of stakeholders into a collaboration ecosystem that can deliver change together.
- **Phase 3, Implementing and Evaluating**, is about implementing planned activities, ensuring mutual learning, and delivering tangible results.
- **Phase 4, Sustaining and Expanding Impact**, is about bringing the collaboration ecosystem to the next level of impact and creating long- term structures for transformative change.

“As a guiding structure for high quality change processes, the DCM engenders a culture of collective leadership and helps collaboration ecosystems deliver results. It offers outcome-focused, well-structured planning and attention to important details that can make collaboration succeed or fail. It recommends three areas of attention in each of the four phases and suggests key questions for reflection” ([Leading Transformative Change Collectively](#), Routledge, 2020, p. 73.)²

The Inter-Ministerial Regional Working Group (IRWG), together with GIZ Green Central Asia (GCA), have done essential work in developing the RCCAS through a political process that primarily engaged government actors. These actors moved through elements of DCM Phase 1 “Exploring and Engaging” and Phase 2 “Building and Formalizing”

² Kuenkel, Petra, Elisabeth Kuehn, Dominic Stucker, and Douglas Williamson (2020). *Leading Transformative Change Collectively: A Practitioner Handbook for Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

together, culminating in the joint adoption of the RCCAS at the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai in December 2023. This is a success to be celebrated and creates a space for other actors to get involved and contribute.

Given that climate change adaptation is complex and that a diversity of actors is required at both regional and national levels to achieve the full potential of RCCAS co-implementation, CLI makes the following overarching recommendations:

- **Take a multi-stakeholder approach:** Fully leverage Dialogic Change Model (DCM) Phase 1 “Exploring and Engaging” to further raise awareness, build trust, and get all stakeholder groups genuinely involved for the onward RCCAS collaboration journey
- **Diversify funding:** In DCM Phase 2 “Building and Formalizing,” make a concerted effort to engage a broader range of funders and funding sources to ensure a robust portfolio of aligned climate action projects in the region
- **Deliver and celebrate first results:** Leverage current momentum in DCM Phase 3 “Implementing and Evaluating” by identifying first opportunities to deliver successes at regional and national levels on concrete topics such as land, water, waste, biodiversity, and energy, as well as the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups for a just transition

The remainder of this Feasibility Study focuses on elements of the first two Phases of the DCM, including the following key recommendations. These are meant to be iterative, in the sense that initial steps taken in Phase 1 of the DCM are meant to be built upon and further formalized in Phase 2 as a foundation for Phase 3 “Implementing and Evaluating.”

i. Dialogic Change Model Phase 1: Exploring and Engaging

For further “Understanding the Context” (section 3.a), CLI recommends to:

- **Continue to position the RCCAS as a regional framework for climate policy alignment:** Position the RCCAS as a regional framework, to support in aligning (a) updating of NDCs (which is also due in 2025); (b) further developing of NAPs; and (c) reviewing and revising the RCCAS Regional Action Plan (RAP) - including integration of national priorities that are missing in the current RAP through an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder process.
- **Thoroughly map an expanded scope of RCCAS actors:** As preparation for reviewing and revising the RCCAS Regional Action Plan in 2025, the emerging Secretariat, drawing on lists generated through CLI’s Engagement Mission, should map actors by regional and national level, stakeholder group (public sector, civil society, academia, private sector), and thematic priorities (e.g. land, water, and waste from the current RAP; biodiversity, which was named during the Engagement Mission multiple times; and energy, which would complement nexus approaches). All actors should be aware of the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups for a just transition.

For further „Creating Resonance for Change” (section 3.b), CLI recommends to:

- **Raise awareness, build trust, and create a spirit of collaboration among an expanded scope of RCCAS actors:** Build further awareness and resonance for the RCCAS and RAP, including among relevant civil society, academia, private sector, and new public sector actors, such as Ministries of Finance and Economy and climate funding agencies. Inspired by the existing RCCAS vision, make space for this greater diversity of actors to co-create a more widely shared vision for climate action in Central Asia. Leverage concrete climate adaptation thematic priorities to create

resonance for change with actors based on their specific expertise and experience (see mapping, above).

- **Be intentional about increased involvement of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups:** Further understand the nuanced gender, youth, and vulnerable group challenges related to full participation in RCCAS co-implementation in each Central Asian country, including through assessments of vulnerabilities, strengths, and priorities related to climate change. Leverage existing networks of women, youth, and vulnerable groups to engage them in dialogue platforms and in contributing to RCCAS co-implementation. For all thematic work that is undertaken, the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups for a just transition should be integrated.

For “Building multi-stakeholder containers for change” (section 3.c), CLI recommends to:

- **Engage an expanded scope of RCCAS actors in high quality engagement processes in each country:** Start with a focus on reviewing and revising the RAP in 2025 as a basis for collectively and more fully implementing the RCCAS. Create safe, trusting spaces for new RCCAS actors to contribute both to a more widely shared vision for climate action in Central Asia and to the development of concrete climate initiatives that can help realize that vision. Design events and processes to foster an empowering spirit of collaboration by being inclusive and participatory, and by modelling genuine dialogue among peers. In addition to topical discussions, start to consult actors on their anticipated roles in emerging RCCAS structures and platforms.
- **Build multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration capacity among all RCCAS actors** at the national and regional levels to ensure that collective leadership helps the Strategy reach its full potential. Such training, if well designed, can simultaneously support the formation of Thematic Working Groups (TWGs, see Phase 2, below) and build their collaboration capacity related to the co-design of concrete initiatives.

ii. Dialogic Change Model Phase 2: Building and Formalizing

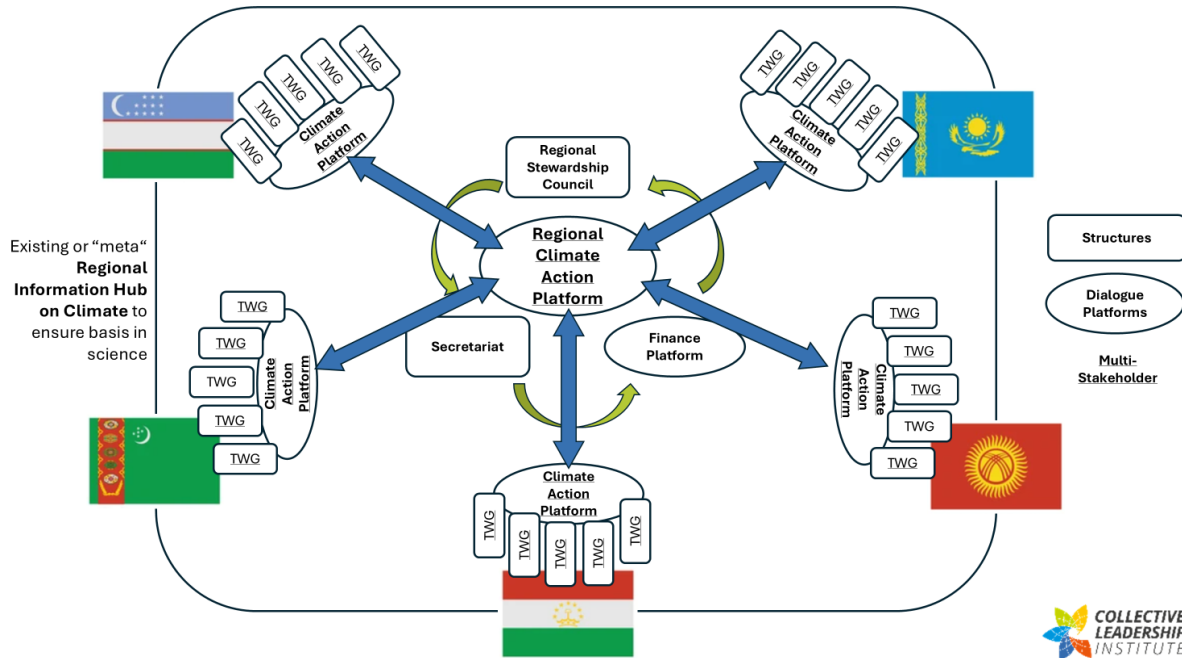
For further “Clarifying common goals and resources” (section 4.a), CLI recommends to:

- **Collectively review and revise the RAP:** Convene high quality dialogues to collect and integrate stakeholder perspectives on the RCCAS vision and RAP Joint Regional Priorities to hone goals and start to align resources. Such an approach can build further ownership, credibility, and innovation around concrete initiatives, as well as the bigger vision for climate in Central Asia.
- **Position the revised RAP as a contribution to the “Central Asia – 2040 Concept” and related Roadmap for 2025-2027** that was proposed as a mechanism for regional cooperation at the most recent VI Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Heads of State in Astana in August 2024. Leveraging synergies between these initiatives can enhance coherence, foster greater regional integration, and strengthen climate resilience efforts across Central Asia.
- **Ensure sustainable resourcing for RCCAS implementation:** Finance partners should shift from a fragmented project-specific mentality to an integrated portfolio-focused one. Instead of moving piece-meal from project to project, a portfolio approach elevates the discussion to ensuring a strategic pipeline of projects at both national and regional levels for climate action. To facilitate this, existing donor

platforms may be used or finance partners could be convened in a Finance Platform for Climate Action in Central Asia (see below under the bullet point Establish a Finance Platform).

For further “Consolidating agreements and establishing structures” (section 4.b), CLI recommends to establish the following structures and platforms:

Fig. 3: Proposed Structures and Platforms for RCCAS Co-Implementation



- **Establish Thematic Working Groups and Climate Action Platforms in each country and at regional level**
 - Establish **multi-stakeholder Thematic Working Groups for Climate Action (TWGs)** in each country that focus on the agreed Joint Regional Priorities in the updated RAP, e.g. on water, land, waste, biodiversity, and additional nexus topics such as energy. All TWGs should integrate the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups for a just transition. TWGs should receive technical and collaboration capacity training and should be responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring concrete climate initiatives. They should engage in regular communication and meet as often as they deem necessary for advancing their respective initiatives.
 - Regularly convene the TWGs along with national members of the Regional Stewardship Council (RSC; see next bullet point) as a **National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform** with the purpose to exchange and learn, identify synergies across initiatives, align with national policy priorities, and adapt implementation approaches. This platform should meet once each year, in the lead up to a regional-level dialogue (see next bullet point).
 - Annually convene selected national stakeholders from the RSC, the TWGs, as well as the Finance Platform, as a **Regional Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform** with the purpose to engage in regional-level exchange, learning, and monitoring of progress (e.g. among TWGs working on the same topic); identify transboundary and regional collaborations; make proposals for possible strategy adaptations for consideration by the RSC; and learn about financing pipeline opportunities from the Finance Platform. This meeting could happen in tandem with ongoing, annual climate meetings in the region, e.g. the ongoing Central Asia Climate Change Conferences (CACCC).

- **Repurpose the existing IRWG as a Regional Stewardship Council for Climate Action**
 - Adapt the name and function of the IRWG (but keep the same core membership) to become a **Regional Stewardship Council for Climate Action** (RSC) with the purpose to maintain alignment of the RCCAS with national policies; provide strategic guidance for RCCAS co-implementation to national actors; and liaise with the Finance Platform to ensure a robust pipeline of climate initiatives at the national, transboundary, and regional levels. In 2025, the RSC should meet virtually every quarter, including an extended portion of the meeting dedicated to meeting with the Finance Platform, discussed below. Furthermore, RSC members should attend their respective National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform dialogues in person, as well as work closely with the Secretariat to prepare and convene the annual Regional Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform meeting, described above.
- **Establish a Finance Platform for Climate Action at regional level**
 - Establish a **Finance Platform for Climate Action** in Central Asia among key donors, financial institutions, and investors to collaborate closely with the RSC and Secretariat with the purpose to regularly review and update climate change finance needs at both national and regional levels; map out potential financing sources according to a matrix (or “taxonomy”) by climate sector and by regional, transboundary, and country levels; present this mapping to interested donors and investors as a climate action portfolio; and enhance cooperation among finance partners with a focus on ensuring a pipeline of climate action projects in the region.
- **Establish a robust and professional Secretariat for Climate Action at regional level** with at least one staff person from each Central Asian country with the purpose to:
 - **Communicate:** Provide relevant, concise, and regular communication among emerging RCCAS structures, especially at regional level; encourage and support communication among national level stakeholders;
 - **Convene:** Take the lead in convening regional level RCCAS dialogues and support national stakeholders in convening their respective dialogues, e.g. among emerging TWGs as they contribute to an updated RAP;
 - **Organize capacity building:** Take the lead in understanding the needs of RCCAS actors and organize technical and collaboration capacity building trainings for members of emerging RCCAS structures, especially the TWGs;
 - **Coordinate:** Once the RAP is updated, take the lead in coordinating regional level activities and encourage the implementation of national level initiatives; and
 - **Manage knowledge and report:** Take the lead in process knowledge management, with active involvement of other actors. Establish a digital Climate Action Portal to support the Secretariat in this function that is accessible to all RCCAS actors and organized by strategic and thematic topics. The RSC, TWGs, and the Secretariat should actively use the Portal for the purpose of documenting exchange and learning, monitoring implementation and progress, and collecting best practices and success stories.
- **Consolidate a Regional Information Hub, with the purpose to:**
 - **Compile and analyse data:** Build skills and provide services to partner organizations, helping them compile and synthesize data from their activities

into useful knowledge products. These products should inform policy development and practical solutions to address climate challenges.

- **Share knowledge:** Share climate change-related know-how effectively across regional organizations, ensure collaboration and exchange of insights, and enable open access to research results and solutions produced by Central Asian organizations, promoting transparency and global sharing of climate knowledge.
- **Build capacity:** Offer advice to national programs and organizations on developing the skills needed to capture, synthesize, and share technical findings effectively. This guidance should help ensure that scientific results and field-level practices are widely disseminated and applied.

For „Planning the future together” (section 4.c), CLI recommends to:

- **Model genuine, multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration by reviewing and revising the RAP in 2025 through an inclusive, bottom-up, and participatory approach in each country, culminating at the regional level:**
 - The emerging Secretariat, with support from GCA and the RSC members, is encouraged to organize country-specific technical dialogues on each current RAP priority topic (land, water, and waste, plus biodiversity, energy, and the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups). Building on the stakeholder lists for each country (*see the CLI Engagement Mission Report, in Annex 2*), prepare for each dialogue with an extensive, thematic stakeholder mapping that makes a special effort to be inclusive of women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Convening stakeholders in this way with thematic expertise and experience represent the first, informal dialogues of emerging Thematic Working Groups.
 - These dialogues should culminate in a participatory meeting of the respective National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform in each country, convened by the respective RSC members with support from the Secretariat, with each TWG reporting back on their priorities, listening to others, finding further synergies using a nexus approach, and adapting initiatives into a national contribution to an updated RAP.
 - RSC members and selected TWG members from each country should then attend a first meeting of the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform to share with their counterpart TWGs, learn how other countries are integrating nexus approaches, and making final adaptations to a fully revised RAP. At the regional dialogue, time should also be dedicated to articulating a broader vision for climate action in Central Asia, enhancing ownership and resonance for the onward collaboration journey.
 - Following the regional dialogue, the RSC should fully review, adapt, and formally approve an updated RAP, encouraging implementation at regional and country levels.
- **Develop and agree to an approach to collectively monitor inclusivity and participation, as well as activities, results, impacts, and process quality** as a basis for moving into DCM Phase 3 on “Implementing and Evaluating:”
 - **Monitoring of inclusivity and participation** should be conducted by the Secretariat, with support from national level stakeholders, on an annual basis. Reporting should be transparent and communicated publicly, including on participation by stakeholder group, gender, age, and vulnerable group (as defined by each country).
 - **Monitoring of activities, results, and impacts** should take a bottom-up approach, with respective TWGs reporting on their initiatives through National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platforms, with results consolidated and

communicated to the Secretariat and RSC for further integration and analysis. This should also occur on an annual basis and be made public.

- **Monitoring of process quality** should be conducted with the Collective Leadership Compass' "Collaboration Catalyst" lens, based on experience that high quality processes are more likely to deliver robust results. This can be useful at different levels, e.g.:
 - TWGs can assess and adapt very specific climate action initiatives by noticing their own stakeholder system's strengths and areas in need of further development
 - National level actors can assess climate collaborations as a whole at the country level, e.g. at a meeting of their Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform
 - A synthesized version of all country-level assessments can serve as a regional-level picture and may be useful for the RSC in their strategic guidance function, building on strengths and addressing areas in need of further development

Overall, CLI is convinced that the stakeholder system for climate action in Central Asia is ready to take up, adapt, and apply the above recommendations because of our direct experience with over 200 stakeholders from across sectors during our Engagement Mission in May 2024. **We experienced that participants:**

- Recognize the complexity of climate change adaptation and the related complexity of actors necessary for its co-implementation
- Appreciated the inclusive and participatory nature of Engagement Mission dialogues
- See the need and value in convening multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms and working groups at national and regional levels.
- Are aware that a multi-stakeholder approach takes time and effort, but increases the likelihood of robust results

Building on these promising signs, more detailed recommendations (indicated with an icon of an arrow) are found below, organized using the phases and elements of the Dialogic Change Model (indicated with an icon of the related DCM Phase). **Recommendations are offered to key RCCAS actors in the spirit of collaboration, with adaptations to the evolving process and context most welcome!**

3. Observations and Recommendations for further “Exploring and Engaging”

a. Understanding the context



Transformative change initiatives can only become successful, if the context is well understood. In engaging a broader scope of climate change adaptation stakeholders, CLI recommends that such contextual awareness, described in part in this section, should be raised.

i. Regional context for climate priorities in Central Asia



Though long in coming, a legal basis for cooperation on climate in Central Asia is emerging. Such cooperation is closely related to water and energy, which has the potential to become more robust and effective. The initial 1992 Almaty Agreement was among the first to regulate water-related issues among the Central Asian countries. In 1999, the Syr Darya Agreement, though short-lived, was more integrated and included energy exchange among the riparian states. Later, more attempts were made to produce a region-wide legal basis for cooperation on environmental, energy, and water issues, for example the Ashgabat Convention on Sustainable Development in 2006. As it was only signed by three countries, however, it was not enforced.

More recently, important momentum at the regional and international levels has been built when the Presidents of Central Asia emphasised the importance of climate change through the environment, climate, and water-related sections of:

- The [Cholpon-Ata Declaration](#) from the IV Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States, July 2022;
- The [Dushanbe Declaration](#) from the V Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States, September 2023; and
- The [Astana Declaration](#) from the VI Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States, August 2024.

Aligned with these consensus statements, promising advances in Central Asia climate cooperation are being made through concrete programs, plans, and strategies:

- The [Aral Sea Basin Program 4](#) (ASBP4), with an implementation period from 2021-2030, has a focus to improve living conditions and increase the well-being of people living in the Aral Sea basin, further expand and strengthen cooperation between Central Asian countries in improving water management, the rational use of water resources, the ecological and socio-economic situation, and adaptation to climate change. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for the Aral Sea (IFAS), the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD), in collaboration with national and international experts, worked on the development of the program following the decision of the board of IFAS.³
- The [Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia](#) (REP4SD-CA), 2020-2030, has a focus on strengthening the political and institutional basis for regional cooperation; strengthening decision-making capacity; strengthening civil society participation; and mobilising (financial) resources, and includes key

³ At present, Kyrgyzstan has “frozen” its participation in IFAS. The country has emphasised that it remains open to re-engagement, contingent upon the implementation of specific reforms within the organisation.

climate adaptation and mitigation measures. The program is under the auspices of the ICSD, and its development was supported by GIZ Regional Program “Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia” and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). As ICSD is under IFAS, the program was adopted by all Central Asian countries except for Kyrgyzstan, which has “frozen” its participation in IFAS.

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute (CAREC Institute) with a climate scoping study and a climate change strategy, entitled [Regional Action on Climate Change: A Vision for Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program](#) (2024) for the CAREC region, which extends beyond Central Asia to include several other Asian countries. Furthermore, the “[Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund](#),” intended to help secure timely international finance through well-prepared, bankable projects was published for review by the 22nd CAREC Ministerial Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia in November 2023.
- The GIZ Green Central Asia program (GCA) has supported the development of the “[Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#)” (RCCAS) which was approved by all 5 Central Asian governments at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai in December 2023.⁴ Indeed, Central Asian countries have started formulating joint positions for the UNFCCC COP meetings, including at COP28.

Considering these Declarations from the last three Consultative Meetings of Heads of State of Central Asian Countries and ongoing regional climate related programs, regional Central Asian climate priorities can be summarized as follows:

⁴ Tajikistan formally approved the RCCAS in January 2024 and Kyrgyzstan in February 2024.

Tab. 1: Regional Climate Priorities and Cooperation Objectives Derived from Existing Declarations and Regional Programs

Declarations from Consultative Meetings of Heads of State of Central Asia	ASBP4	REP4SD-CA	CAREC Institute Program
Increase cooperation in hydropower	Increase the well-being of the population	Provide a political and institutional basis for regional cooperation	Mitigate and adapt to climate change, priority areas for investment.
Establish a regional project office for environmental protection	Strengthen cooperation to improve water management and the ecological and socio-economic situation	Strengthen decision-making capacity	Align with national strategies and the Paris Agreement
Implement a coordinated policy on climate change in the region	Ensure the rational use of water resources	Strengthen civil society participation	Enhance regional cooperation on climate actions
Strengthen regional cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation	Adapt to climate change	Mobilise (financial) resources	Expand coordination with development partners
		Adapt to (and mitigate) climate change	Integrate the private sector and civil society into the dialogue
			Create an open, inclusive regional platform for addressing climate change

While these point to regional climate priorities, each has specific shortcomings:

Tab. 2: Gaps of Existing Regional Programs and Declarations

Presidential Declarations	ASBP4	REP4SD-CA	CAREC Program
Strategic: Remain declarations of political intention	Strategic: Largely a collection of projects with no or limited conceptual linkages	Strategic: Largely a strategic plan without concrete implementable actions	Strategic: Could be a “sister” strategy to RCCAS but has broader climate action focus and goes beyond Central Asia
Operational: Concrete activities and monitoring mechanisms lacking	Operational: Financing, monitoring, and coordination remain challenging	Operational: Financing and coordination mechanisms lacking	Operational: Anticipated action plan, like RCCAS’s RAP, to be updated every 3 years

For specific recommendations on addressing these regional gaps, please see section 4.a. on Clarifying Common Goals and Resources, below.

In the meantime, it is worth noting that **the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (RCCAS or the Strategy) - through its four Strategic Objectives - has done a good job**

of integrating the above regional climate priorities and has been adopted by all 5 Central Asian countries:

Tab. 3: Relating Regional Climate Priorities with RCCAS Objectives

Crosscutting regional priorities	Related RCCAS Strategic Objectives
Enhance regional cooperation on water, climate, environment, society	1. “Strengthen regional coordination for climate change”
Resource (financial) mobilisation	2. “Create mechanisms for the development and implementation of adaptation projects/programs and attraction of financing”
Sectoral adaptation	
Decision-making capacity	3. “Improve adaptive capacity through accumulation and sharing of knowledge and scientific cooperation”
Civil society participation	
Adaptation to climate change	4. “Develop climate monitoring, information exchange, and forecasting systems”
Decision-making capacity	

Indeed, the RCCAS is positioned as a framework strategy for climate action in Central Asia and could fill some of the above gaps in regional declarations and programs. If realised to its full potential, the RCCAS could be a game-changer in this field.

Furthermore, any regional climate strategy will have important linkages to national climate policies and priorities, discussed in the next section.

ii. National policy context for climate priorities in Central Asia



Analysis of national climate policies shows that Central Asian countries have developed **extensive legislation in the environment, water, energy, transport, social, and urban sectors, with all generally including climate change priorities**. Though Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are in place and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) on climate are “in progress” (see Table 5, below) **climate change legislation is currently fragmented due to its sectoral nature**. Importantly, related implementation mechanisms and financing sources, including market-based ones, are generally not well identified.

Though no Central Asian country has a unified climate law, crosscutting national climate priorities tend to be more concrete than those at the regional level:

- Addressing environmental impacts, disaster risks, and food insecurity, including prevention of land degradation
- Sustainably and efficiently managing water, agriculture, and land resources, including crop diversification
- Conserving ecosystems
- Developing sustainable transport systems

- Mitigating the impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups and sectors
- Contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation as a region

The RCCAS is accompanied by a preliminary [Regional Action Plan for Joint Political Dialogue on Climate, Environment and Security](#) (RAP) that is meant to be reviewed and revised every three years, starting in 2025. The RAP outlines four joint regional priorities that map onto existing national priorities in the following ways:

Tab. 4: Relating National Climate Priorities with Regional Action Plan (RAP) Joint Regional Priorities

Crosscutting national priorities	Related RAP Joint Regional Priorities
Addressing environmental impacts, disaster risks, and food insecurity, including prevention of land degradation	1. Climate Change Impact on Regional Water Resources Management
Sustainably and efficiently managing water, agriculture, and land resources, including crop diversification	2. Climate Change Impact on Land Management
Conserving ecosystems	
Contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation as a region	3. Cooperation in and Contribution to International Instruments
Conserving ecosystems	4. Waste Management

The RAP aligns well with national priorities but does not explicitly include ones on developing sustainable transport systems or mitigating the impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups and sectors. Furthermore, conserving ecosystems is certainly supported by good land, water, and waste management, but would benefit by making biodiversity an explicit Joint Regional Priority. Such topics should be taken up when the RAP is reviewed and revised in 2025, alongside consideration of energy - a key nexus topic that is missing - as an explicit Joint Regional Priority. The RCCAS and an updated RAP provide a good basis for strengthened regional collaboration on climate.

Central Asian institutions are still transitioning from the formerly planned Soviet system into more market-related systems. On the one hand, the centralised nature of national agencies could help concentrate both financial and government efforts but, on the other hand, this may slow more local-level climate action for adaptation and mitigation.

For the most part, Central Asian countries have yet to develop coordination mechanisms (bodies/platforms) for inter-sectoral coordination on implementation of climate change priorities. Responsibilities on climate are usually **distributed between the economic and nature protection agencies**. At the regional level, the RCCAS and related structures that will need to be established for its co-implementation, represent a very important opportunity for regional collaboration on climate (see section 4.b. on Consolidating Agreements and Establishing Structures, below).

The degree to which climate is (or is not) a priority for different Central Asian countries can be seen, in part, through the frequency of their official National Communications (NCs) to the UNFCCC, as well as the existence (and ambition) of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), in Table 5, below. Countries are required to submit NDCs every 5 years and NCs every 4

years. At present, many countries are developing their NAPs which are due by 2025. So far, 58 have been submitted worldwide.⁵ As for Central Asian countries, all countries are currently in the process of developing their NAPs.

Though these are not formal UNFCCC NAPs, it is important to highlight that:

- Turkmenistan has had a [National Strategy of Turkmenistan on Climate Change](#) since 2012, which was updated in 2019.
- Tajikistan has adopted a [National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#) (2019) extending through 2030, which offers guidance for its NAP process⁶.
- Uzbekistan has adopted a [National Action Plan to Increase Resilience to Natural Disasters and Climate Change](#), extending through 2030.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan has adopted a [Strategy for achieving carbon neutrality of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2060](#), which reflects the country's commitment to address climate change and transitioning to low-carbon development⁷. The worldwide number of current Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategies (LT-LEDs) submissions is 73.⁸ Though the Kazakh strategy focuses on carbon neutrality, it has not been officially submitted to UNFCCC as an LT-LEDs.

All countries of Central Asia are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and each has a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAPs) with different timelines for adoption and updating.

⁵ [List of National Adaptation Plans](#) (NAPs) submitted by developing countries at NAP Central, accessed September 4, 2024.

⁶ [Enabling an effective National Adaptation Plan process for Tajikistan](#), *UNDP Climate Change Adaptation*, accessed September 4, 2024.

⁷ [Climate Action Tracker - Kazakhstan](#), accessed September 4, 2024.

⁸ [Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategies](#), UNFCCC, accessed September 4, 2024.

Tab. 5: National Communications (NCs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Biodiversity Strategies by Country

	Kazakhstan ⁹	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
NCs	1998 2009 2013 2017 2022	2003 2008 2017	2002 2008 2014 2022	2000 2010 2016	1999 2008 2017
NDCs	2016 updated 2023	2020 updated 2021	2017 updated 2021	2016 updated 2023	2018 updated 2021
NAPs	Currently “in progress”	Currently “in progress”	Currently “in progress”	Currently “in progress”	Currently “in progress”
Bio-diversity plans	NBSAP	NBSAP	NBSAP	NBSAP	NBSAP
Related climate plans	Strategy for Achieving Carbon Neutrality until 2060		National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change 2019-2030	National Strategy of Turkmenistan on Climate Change (updated 2019)	National Action Plan to Increase Resilience to Natural Disasters and Climate Change in 2023-2030

The year 2025 represents a significant opportunity for Central Asia to integrate and advance existing climate-related policies, including in relationship to UNFCCC and CBD processes. NDCs are meant to be updated in 2025 ([NDC 3.0](#)) and NAPs are due from each country, which aligns well with the planned review and revision of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) associated with the RCCAS in the same year.

Indeed, the RCCAS has the potential to be a regional-level framework for Central Asian countries to reference in updating their NDCs and developing their NAPs, which could connect with updating the RCCAS-related Regional Action Plan (see related recommendations, in section 4.a., below). *For more detail on NDC targets, sectors, and measures for each country, please see the table in Annex 3.*

In pursuing an integrated approach to regional climate action, however, the lack of both institutional and human capacities at different levels is a significant problem. Specific issues, for example, are the challenges of climate information accessibility and exchange of data. Although the Central Asia region has made considerable progress in digitalization over the last five years, **the climate-related sphere still needs to catch up on digitalization and easy access to data, information, and services.** Most of the data and information on climate change are still in outdated formats, shared with delay due to the absence of the common climate data systems. Table 6 offers an overview of key barriers to climate action at a national level:

⁹ Kazakhstan is considered an Annex I Party under the Kyoto Protocol but remains a non-Annex I Party for the Convention. UNFCCC. [National Communication submissions from Non-Annex I Parties](#).

Tab. 6: Key Barriers to Effective Implementation of Climate Priorities at the National Level

Public Sector	Regulatory	Private Sector	Technology
• Weak institutional and human capacities in decision making processes, including knowledge gaps • Fragmented responsibilities, poor institutional cooperation, and lack of resources • Lack of redistribution of sound fiscal systems promoting low-carbon transition • Lack of alignment of public expenditure planning and procurement with climate targets • Lack of tracking mechanisms for public and private climate investments • Lack of a just-transition perspective that integrates social factors • National borders that often hamper sustainable and integrated management of natural resources • Lack of understanding of the intersectoral nature of climate change risks, vulnerabilities, and adaptation capacities	• Insufficient alignment of sectoral policies with climate priorities • Lack of communication and awareness of climate priorities • Renewable energy tariffs that are non-competitive to cheap fossil fuel energy sources in some countries (coal, natural gas, oil) • Missing enabling regulatory framework (i.e., green taxonomy) • Missing incentives for low-carbon investment • Lack of public and private finance for low-carbon investments • Lack of carbon pricing policies	• Unfavourable investment environment for inter-national financiers • Lack of dedicated finance for low-carbon projects and access to conventional financial instruments (i.e., guarantees)	• Lack of accessibility and affordability of low-carbon technologies • Lack of investment and capacity building for new forecasting technologies and data analysis, including climate information and Earth observations

For recommendations on addressing these national level barriers, please see section 4.a.ii, below. In the next section, we explore how these challenges are further compounded by the complex stakeholder landscape for climate action in Central Asia.

iii. Stakeholder and technical knowledge of climate actors in Central Asia



Stakeholder landscape knowledge

Government representatives who were part of the RCCAS co-development process all recognize that a range of public sector institutions and agencies need to be involved in addressing climate change; many also see the need for involving other sectors. Civil society and academia actors involved in the CLI engagement mission recognize that all sectors need to be involved in addressing climate change. While engagement of civil society may look differently in each Central Asian country, CLI encourages RCCAS actors to genuinely engage existing civil society organizations and networks that demonstrate an interest in addressing climate challenges together. Building their capacity to contribute will help fulfil RCCAS potential.

The following table shows the **specific RCCAS regional and national-level stakeholders - specific institutions, organisations, and companies** - identified by participants for successful RCCAS co-implementation. For the regional level and for each country, stakeholders are listed by sector. A total list of more than 300 stakeholders was generated, reflecting the crosscutting and complex nature of climate change action in Central Asia. *Please see Annex 2, CLI Engagement Mission Report, for a consolidated list of all stakeholders by sector and country.*

Tab. 7: Regional and national-level stakeholders - institutions, organisations, companies - identified by Engagement Mission participants for successful RCCAS co-implementation

	Public Sector	Civil Society	Academia	Private Sector	Dev. Partners	Other	TOTAL
REG	11	11	18	6	26	3	75
KYR	18	12	10	5	0	2	47
KAZ	19	9	16	19	0	3	66
TAJ	19	14	8	11	0	1	53
TKM	11	6	4	2	0	1	24
UZB	18	7	7	3	0	2	37
TOTAL	96	59	63	46	26	12	302

The institutional context of the region is both diverse and emergent. Please note that these are not individuals, but rather specific Ministries and agencies, NGOs and networks, universities and research institutes, companies and business associations, and development partner organisations and donors. Nearly all of the “other” stakeholders came from the media

sector. Key stakeholders include interstate organisations, commissions, and international projects.

Given the regional focus of the Strategy, it seems appropriate that **regional level stakeholders outnumber the stakeholders from any single country. One third of regional level stakeholders listed are development partners**, signalling the important bridging, convening, and resourcing roles they can and must play.

Seen from a multi-stakeholder perspective, **public sector stakeholders are listed the most**, indicating an important leadership role and the need to involve a variety of line ministries. The number of **civil society and academia stakeholders is also very** significant for successful Strategy co-implementation. Even though private sector participation was low in the country dialogues, a **significant number of companies and business associations were listed** in relation to the Strategy.

A challenging aspect of this stakeholder landscape is that climate actors are often involved in multiple parallel initiatives with different development partners, such as ADB, GIZ, UNDP, and/or the World Bank. This can be confusing and cause inefficiencies.

Technical knowledge on climate change

Technical knowledge on climate change impacts and possible adaptation measures **is often held by government representatives**, e.g. in Ministries of Ecology and HydroMets, as well as such platforms as the [CAR@WAN network](#) and the [Regional Research Network “Water in Central Asia”](#). While climate change is understood as an important, complex, and cross-cutting issue, knowledge of financial instruments and donor funding, usually held by Ministries of Finance, has not been sufficiently integrated into resourcing climate-related initiatives.

Knowledge on climate change is also held by academia and civil society, e.g. the community of experts, organizations, and institutions who attend the annual [Central Asia Climate Change Conferences](#) (CACCCs); platforms such as the [Regional Climate Action Transparency Hub for Central Asian States](#) (ICAT) and the [Information Portal on Climate Adaptation and Mitigation in Central Asia](#) (CACIP); and networks such as the [Central Asian Network of Academic Societies](#), “[Green CA](#)” regional environmental expert network, the emerging [Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan](#) network, and the [Regional Climate Change Conference of Youth](#) (RCOY Central Asia), endorsed by YOUNGO UNFCCC¹⁰. Climate change is also understood by academia and civil society as being an important, complex, and cross-cutting issue.

Challenges related to technical knowledge include the fact that the quality of climate data is sometimes disputable and that there is often a fragmented approach to data metrics and collection.

iv. Recommendations regarding “understanding the context”



If RCCAS co-implementation is to be successful, it is essential to further increase awareness of the Strategy and the context among the 300+ institutions, organisations, and businesses generated by participants in the CLI Engagement Mission, above. As a basis for this, we recommend the following:

¹⁰ [YOUNGO](#) is the official children and youth constituency of UNFCCC and seeks to empower youth and formally bring their voices to the UNFCCC processes.

- **Technical knowledge:** Enhance information management on climate in Central Asia by leveraging the RCCAS to ensure greater quality control of climate data; apply a metadata approach to data metrics and collection; and enhance sharing of climate data among Central Asia countries.
- **Financing:** Involve Ministries of Finance and Economy, which work with climate financing, in helping resource the RCCAS and related climate initiatives. Involve more donors to diversify and align funding for climate action in Central Asia.
- **Stakeholder mapping:** As preparation for reviewing and revising the RCCAS Regional Action Plan in 2025, involved actors should be mapped around thematic priorities, e.g. related to expertise and experience on land, water, and waste from the current RAP, but also on biodiversity conservation, which was named during the engagement mission multiple times, and on energy to take into account nexus approaches.
- **Policy alignment:** Continue to position the RCCAS as a regional framework, to support in aligning the updating of NDCs and submission of NAPs (which are both due in 2025); and reviewing and revising the RCCAS Regional Action Plan - including integration of national priorities that are missing in the current RAP, such as developing sustainable transport systems, mitigating the impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups and sectors, and building on existing NBSAPs - through an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder process.
- **Crosscutting:** In general, seek to combine political influence (e.g. through international climate commitments, Presidential Decrees, and Ministries of Foreign Affairs); with technical and stakeholder landscape knowledge; with diversified financial resources as a basis for genuine and sustained action on climate change.

All of these recommendations are further developed in chapter 4, below, on DCM Phase 2 “Building and Formalizing”, specifically relating to onward planning processes and proposed structures:

- An adapted function and name for the existing RCCAS Inter-Ministerial Regional Working Group
- A Secretariat for climate action
- A Finance Platform for climate action
- National and regional multi-stakeholder Climate Action Platforms
- Multi-stakeholder Thematic Working Groups in each country advancing concrete initiatives
- A Regional Information Hub to inform climate policy and action

b. Creating resonance for change



Raising the energy for change in a stakeholder system requires not only information but also human-to-human connections.

i. Building awareness, trust, and a desire to collaborate across sectors for RCCAS co-implementation



Awareness and interest among government representatives from all 5 Central Asian countries was created through the Inter-Ministerial Regional Working Group’s (IRWG’s) participation in the process of co-developing the RCCAS from February 2022 - September 2023 with support of the GIZ Green Central Asia (GCA) program. This represents an important and essential start, though **these challenges need to be addressed:**

1. There is a relatively high turn-over among IRWG members;
2. The IRWG includes only traditional government climate actors and does not, for example, include representatives from Ministries of Finance and Economy¹¹; and
3. Actors from non-governmental sectors have not been sufficiently engaged yet (though discussions on this topic are ongoing).

Awareness and ownership of the RCCAS is lower among civil society, academia, and the private sector. Indeed, neither the Strategy nor the current Regional Action Plan make reference to multi-stakeholder approaches.

All the same, when civil society and academia actors were asked - on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 meaning “not at all” and 10 “completely” – **“To what extent do civil society and academia actors in Central Asia support the content of the RCCAS?”** the results were quite high as shown in Table 8:

Tab. 8: Support for specific RCCAS content among civil society and academia actors

RCCAS Elements	Civil Society	Academia	AVERAGE
Long-term vision (improve climate resilience)	7.4	7.1	7.25
Overall goal (develop cooperation mechanism)	9.0	8.3	8.65
Objective 1 (regional coordination)	9.2	8.2	8.70
Objective 2 (implementation of projects)	9.1	9.1	9.10
Objective 3 (improving adaptive capacity)	9.2	9.5	9.35
Objective 4 (climate monitoring, forecasting)	9.5	9.4	9.45

While well supported, the RCCAS vision was assessed lower than the more concrete overall goal and objectives. Of special note is very high support for concrete objectives, such as implementation of projects, improving adaptive capacity, and climate monitoring and forecasting. Using the same scale, Table 9 shows support for Regional Action Plan elements:

¹¹ Kyrgyzstan has signalled an interest in this approach by having included a representative of its Ministry of Finance in its IRWG meeting in July 2024.

Tab. 9: Support for specific Regional Action Plan content among civil society and academia actors

Regional Action Plan Joint Priorities	Civil Society	Academia	AVERAGE
Regional Priority 1: Water	9.2	9.0	9.10
Regional Priority 2: Land	8.7	9.1	8.90
Regional Priority 3: International instruments	8.7	8.4	8.55
Regional Priority 4: Waste	8.4	9.2	8.80

These concrete Joint Regional Priorities were strongly supported, especially related to water, land, and waste. Along with the addition of biodiversity and energy as Regional Action Plan themes, plus the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups, these topics are well placed to underpin the formation of national-level Thematic Working Groups, discussed below in chapter 4 on DCM Phase 2 of “Building and Formalizing”.

- ii. Building awareness, trust, and a desire to collaborate among women, youth, and vulnerable groups for RCCAS co-implementation



In addition to inclusion of actors across sectors, further attention needs to be given to genuine engagement of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups in climate action and RCCAS co-implementation. Neither the Strategy nor the current Regional Action Plan make reference to gender-sensitive or intergenerational approaches.

During CLI’s Engagement Mission, both women and young professionals participated and made meaningful contributions through Country Dialogues. Individuals invited consisted of 57% women and 43% men. Invitations were sent to all age groups and, though age was not explicitly tracked, each dialogue attracted an intergenerational cross-section of participants.



As the RCCAS and the Regional Action Plan do not currently have a strong gender lens or intergenerational approach, inspiration can be taken from [Tajikistan’s National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2030 \(NCCAS\)](#). The NCCAS shows awareness of gaps related to engagement of women, girls, and vulnerable groups. Given similarities in how women are perceived across the region, these observations may be useful in other Central Asian countries.

“Gaps in the gender sector by capacity level

- **Systemic level** 1. Low level of women's representation in all branches of government; 2. Social norms limit women's rights in decision making at both household and farm levels; 3. Social norms inhibit women's presence and level of participation in trainings, especially in groups where both genders are involved.
- **Organizational level** 4. State women's associations are not engaged on climate related issues; 5. Women's NGOs have very low awareness of climate change and adaptation issues; 6. Organizations fail to realize the magnitude of climate threats to women, especially in rural areas.
- **Individual level** 7. Lack of awareness on climate change issues among women; 8. Lack of decision-making power among women to take adaptation measures; 9. Lack of information on preparing for and responding to extreme weather events among women, including knowledge of evacuation rules and basic survival skills such as swimming; 10. Lack of opportunity to attend workshops and trainings on climate risk reduction and management” (Tajikistan NCCAS, 2019, table 8, p.67).

Insights regarding the challenges of youth and young professional preparedness to engage in climate action can be gleaned from excerpted observations on the educational system in Tajikistan’s national climate adaptation strategy.

“Gaps in the education sector by capacity level

- **Systemic level** 1. Climate change is not addressed in environmental education laws and policies on environmental education; 2. Climate change is not integrated into curricula, even if laws and policies would support it as part of environmental education;... 5. Awareness raising campaigns are highly dependent on donor funding and their sustainability is lacking; 6. Lack of media news coverage of environmental issues limits opportunities for journalists...
- **Organizational level** 7. Lack of coordination and duplication of responsibilities hinder the ability of government agencies to provide education on the environment and climate change;... 11. Lack of funds in government agencies and NGOs to conduct continuous outreach and training, and the activities they bring in largely depend on donors.
- **Individual level** 12. Educators and civil servants working in the education sector have little knowledge of climate change; 13. The growth of climate change knowledge among students and interns is limited due to the lack of climate change materials in Tajik...” (Tajikistan NCCAS, 2019, table 7, p.66).

The following observations from the Tajikistan NCCAS can apply to women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. These challenges need to be addressed to empower such groups to fully participate in RCCAS co-implementation.

“Vulnerable group sector gaps by capacity level

- **Systemic level** 1. Climate change and adaptation issues are not fully integrated in Social Sector Strategy Documents.
- **Organizational Level** 2. The Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Employment does not have the necessary financial resources related to adaptation, even when they would like to reduce the threats faced by vulnerable groups; 3. NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) working with vulnerable groups often lack the appropriate level of awareness of climate change and adaptation to it.
- **Individual level** 4. Vulnerable individuals lack the necessary benefits and entitlements to become climate resilient; 5. Vulnerable individuals lack access to climate information and knowledge” (Tajikistan NCCAS, 2019, table 10, p.68).

Please find recommendations for engaging vulnerable groups in the next section.

iii. Recommendations regarding “creating resonance for change” among a greater scope of RCCAS actors



We recommend continuing to raise awareness, build trust, and create a spirit of collaboration among the full scope of climate actors for RCCAS co-implementation:

- Build further awareness and resonance for the RCCAS and Regional Action Plan, including among relevant civil society, academia, private sector, and new public sector actors, such as Ministries of Finance and Economy and climate funding agencies, e.g. through key national and regional meetings of RCCAS actors, described below in section 4.c. on Planning the Future Together
- Inspired by the existing RCCAS vision, make space for this greater diversity of actors to contribute to a more fully shared vision for climate action in Central Asia, e.g. through key national and regional meetings of RCCAS actors, described below in section 4.c. on Planning the Future Together
- Leverage concrete climate adaptation topics from the Regional Action Plan (e.g. land, water, and waste, plus biodiversity and energy) with the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups to create resonance for change with actors based on their specific expertise and experience, e.g. through the first meetings of Technical Working Groups at national level, described below in section 4.c. on Planning the Future Together

We recommend enhanced involvement of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups (as defined in each country context):

- IRWG members and other incoming RCCAS actors should seek to understand the nuanced gender, youth, and vulnerable group challenges related to full participation in RCCAS co-implementation in each Central Asian country, including through vulnerability assessments
- Leverage existing women and youth networks - such as the Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan Network, the Regional Climate Change Conference of Youth (RCOY Network), and the Central Asia Youth for Water Network - to take an inclusive and empowering approach to RCCAS co-implementation
- Ensure climate adaptation and education policies address gender-specific impacts, recognizing the roles of women and vulnerable groups in food security, water management, and disaster resilience. Policy coherence and coordination across sectors are crucial to maximising benefits for vulnerable groups and ensuring social equity in climate action
- Create and implement inclusive and gender-sensitive climate change capacity building and training programs for multi-stakeholder and intergenerational groups

c. Building multi-stakeholder “containers” for change



“Transformative change needs people who see collaboration and dialogue as an important resource and who are capable of implementing it” ([Leading Transformative Change Collectively](#), Routledge, 2020, p.81).

i. Toward a greater diversity of actors for RCCAS co-implementation



The IRWG, together with GIZ Green Central Asia, was the initial core group or “container” for RCCAS co-development that successfully navigated an initial Phase 1 “Exploring and Engaging” and Phase 2

“Building and Formalizing” process in the Dialogic Change Model, leading to unanimous Strategy adoption. Members, however, came almost exclusively from the government sector, meaning that the container was not representative of the broader Central Asian “collaboration ecosystem” it seeks to bring to life. This is a key part of what it means to build a good container. Additional factors of a good container include that members:

- Are committed to one another and the bigger shared goal;
- Are desirous and capable of taking responsibility for the process; and
- Recognize dialogue and collaboration across sectors and levels as essential for success.

In moving the process forward, it is essential to be inclusive of key climate actors across sectors, including women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Multi-stakeholder containers are needed to contribute to RCCAS co-implementation, especially at the country level for driving climate initiatives and engaging in dialogue that helps inform regional plans and strategies. Such containers can start in an informal manner (e.g. through first thematic dialogues in each country on RAP Joint Regional Priorities), before related structures are identified and/or established (e.g. Thematic Working Groups advancing initiatives on Joint Regional Priorities), described further in chapter 4 on DCM Phase 2 “Building and Formalizing”.

In this regard, promising signs from the CLI Engagement Mission include:

- Governments have come together and made the first regional-level move toward climate change adaptation in Central Asia. Now, other sectors have a space within which to contribute in potentially meaningful ways.
- As participants learn about the RCCAS and the Regional Action Plan, there is a high level of support for its content and co-implementation.
- Participants recognize the complexity of climate change adaptation and the related complexity of actors necessary for its co-implementation. This can be seen as an informal mandate or justification for forming multi-stakeholder containers on specific themes.
- Participants appreciated the inclusive and participatory nature of the CLI Consultations and Country Dialogues and the vast majority of IRWG members are open to taking multi-stakeholder approaches for RCCAS co-implementation.

The Engagement Mission showed that, when invited, civil society and academia actors really show up, constituting 70% of all participants. Table 10 shows the number of individual participants by sector in RCCAS Civil Society and Academia Consultations, Country-Specific Dialogues, the Regional Dialogue, and the Development Partner Consultation.¹²

¹² These numbers do not include preparatory meetings held with IRWG members and regional institutions in each city, nor do they include bilateral engagements at the Central Asian Climate Change Conference in Almaty.

Tab. 10: Engagement Mission participants by stakeholder group

	Reg. Inst.	Public Sector	Civil Society	Academia	Private Sector	Dev. Partners	TOTAL
Civil Society Consult., 25 April	1		32			1	34
Academia Consult., 30 April				23		1	24
Ashgabat Dialogue, 7 May	3	3	3			1	10
Tashkent Dialogue, 14 May		5	23	7		1	36
Dushanbe Dialogue, 17 May	2	2	9	7		4	24
Astana Dialogue, 21 May	3	3	8	5		1	20
Bishkek Dialogue, 24 May	1	6	7	8	1	3	26
Regional Dialogue, 30 May	7	1	12	6	1	6	33
Dev. Partner Consult., 17 July				1		9	10
TOTAL	17	20	94	57	2	27	217
PERCENTAGE	8%	9%	44%	26%	1%	12%	

Engaged individuals, such as the above, who have the expertise, experience, and interest in climate change topics and come from organizations, institutions, or businesses with the potential to contribute to RCCAS co-implementation are the kind of people needed for multi-stakeholder RCCAS containers.

ii. How can each stakeholder group contribute?



Sheer numbers, however, are not enough. Contribution matters. During each of the 5 Country Dialogues that CLI facilitated, participants responded to the question “**How can each stakeholder group contribute to RCCAS co-implementation?**” These are the top, regional-level responses, showing an

awareness of the value of multi- stakeholder approaches among Central Asian climate actors:

Public Sector can contribute to RCCAS co-implementation by:

- Taking multi-stakeholder approaches for RCCAS co-implementation
- Identifying and/or establishing appropriate bodies for RCCAS co-implementation
- Engaging in joint, coordinated, and harmonized implementation of RCCAS
- Ensuring sufficient funds for RCCAS co-implementation
- Strengthening effective coordination among public sector actors
- Raising awareness about RCCAS co-implementation

Civil Society can contribute to RCCAS co-implementation by:

- Taking a regional, networked approach for RCCAS co-implementation
- Contributing effectively to coordinated and contextualized RCCAS co-implementation
- Engaging in regional dialogue and speaking with one voice
- Raising awareness about RCCAS co-implementation
- Building capacity for and through Central Asia networks and associations
- Helping mobilize funds

Academia can contribute to RCCAS co-implementation by:

- Engaging in regional level climate research and information exchange
- Engaging in academic collaborations across the region, creating a network

Private Sector can contribute to RCCAS co-implementation by:

- Applying good business practices that contribute to climate change goals
- Participating in regional and national dialogues on climate change action

Participants added that all stakeholder groups should contribute to the development of an RCCAS roadmap, which we recommend be integrated into the updated Regional Action Plan in 2025. *Stakeholder group contributions by sector at the country level can be found in Annex 2, CLI Engagement Mission Report.*

iii. Climate partners: A general typology



In the table below, Central Asian climate actors are classified into general types relevant to RCCAS co-implementation such that linkages can be made between stakeholder types and functions within proposed Dialogic Change Model Phase 2 “Building and Formalizing” structures at the regional level and in each country.

Tab. 11: A Proposed RCCAS Stakeholder Typology

Stakeholder Type	Example Institutions, Organizations	Example Individuals	Potential Role
Policy partners	- Presidential Administrations - Ministries of Environment, Ecology and Climate - Ministries of Energy, Water, Agriculture, Disaster Risk Reduction	- High-level representatives and climate focal points of policy-making bodies, climate-related ministries, and environment bodies, including energy, water, and other vulnerable sectors	- Engagement in strategic planning to support implementation of the RCCAS - Engagement in related policy making and advocacy processes - Sharing of policy relevant knowledge across countries

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	(DRR), and other vulnerable sectors		- Training and capacity building, e.g. on policy making processes
Finance partners	- Ministries of Economy, Finance, and Investment - EU, World Bank, ADB - UNFCCC funding mechanisms (Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, Loss and Damage Fund)	- High-level representatives, staff, and climate focal points of finance and economic ministries who make strategic decisions on financing matters - Staff from strategic planning and financing bodies - Representatives of international donors, partners, and funds interested in climate change adaptation in the region	- Identify an integrated approach to ensuring short-term and long-term funding for RCCAS co-implementation at both regional and national levels
Implementing partners	- Ministries of Environment, Ecology and Climate - Ministries of Energy, Water, Agriculture, DRR, and other vulnerable sectors - Civil society organizations - Business associations and selected companies	- Staff from climate- related ministries and environment bodies - Staff from civil society organizations focused on climate topics - Representatives of business associations - Employees of private sector companies with genuine climate commitments	- Participation in trainings on both technical climate topics and multi- stakeholder collaboration capacity - Implementation of concrete national, transboundary, and regional partnerships through the Regional Action Plan - Joint monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on progress
Knowledge partners	- German-Kazakh University (DKU), Central Asian Environmental and Climate Change University - Green University, TIAME, IAU - Regional organizations such as IFAS and subsidiary bodies, CAREC Institute, CAREC Eco - Other relevant universities, education centers	- Representatives of Central Asian universities, research institutes, and regional climate-related networks - Key staff from regional organizations working on climate change - Representatives and project staff from international partners - Resources persons and trainers from civil society organizations	- Provision of scientific climate data and information - Implementation of information sharing, data systematization - Provision of knowledge and skills development trainings - Support to RCCAS co-implementation

Further tables listing specific stakeholders of each type across sectors at the regional and national levels can be found in Annex 4. These lists are meant to complement the extensive list of over 300 regional and national-level stakeholders generated by participants through CLI's Engagement Mission, with a related report in Annex 2.

iv. Recommendations regarding “building multi-stakeholder containers for change”



Building on the above recommendations to further understand the context (e.g. stakeholder mapping) and to create resonance (interest or motivation) across sectors and stakeholder groups, we recommend to **engage a greater diversity of actors in multi-stakeholder country containers through high quality processes that focus on revising the Regional Action Plan in 2025 as a basis for collectively implementing the Strategy:**

Crosscutting

- Create safe, trusting spaces for new RCCAS actors to contribute both to a more fully shared vision for climate action in Central Asia and to the development of concrete climate initiatives that can help realize that vision
- Design events and processes to foster an empowering spirit of collaboration - “Everyone has an important contribution to make!” - by being inclusive and participatory and modelling genuine dialogue among peers
- Actively seek out participation from women, youth, and persons from vulnerable groups
- Apply intergenerational approaches, encouraging dialogue and collaboration among senior, mid-career, and early career professionals
- Build dialogue and collaboration capacity among all RCCAS actors at the national and regional levels to ensure the Strategy reaches its full potential

Furthermore, in convening actors into multi-stakeholder containers, **we recommend engaging them in dialogue on linkages they see between stakeholder type/function and proposed RCCAS structures, in Table 12, below.** This will involve actors mapping themselves according to this stakeholder typology.

Tab. 12: Relating Stakeholder Typology and Function to Proposed RCCAS Structures and Platforms

Stakeholder type and function	Proposed, emerging structures for convening related stakeholders
Policy partners Strategic and stewarding function	Repurpose the current IRWG into a: Regional Stewardship Council for Climate Action (RSC) that looks after and offers guidance on RCCAS co-implementation
Financing partners Resourcing and thought partner function	Establish a: Regional Finance Platform for Climate Action that seeks to secure sufficient and sustainable resources for co-implementation
Implementing partners Coordination, communication, convening, organization of capacity building, and knowledge management function	Establish a: Professional, virtual Regional Secretariat for Climate Action that includes at least one staff person from each country and ensures overall coordination of co-implementation
Implementing partners Collaboration, reporting, and exchange and learning function	In each country, establish a: Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform, including Thematic Working Groups, that design, implement, and report on concrete initiatives in the updated Regional Action Plan
Knowledge partners Scientific and training function, both for technical knowledge and collaboration capacity	Synthesise and/or link existing knowledge platforms to establish a: Regional Information Hub for Climate Action to compile and analyze data and share knowledge

A process for further elaborating and activating the above structures is proposed below, in section 4.b. on Consolidating Agreements and Establishing Structures.

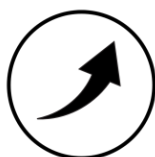
4. Observations and Recommendations for further “Building and Formalizing”

a. Clarifying common goals and resources



“The interest and commitment of stakeholders that has been built up during Phase 1 needs to be consolidated into working structures in Phase 2. This means that the purpose and goal of the multi-stakeholder collaboration process that was held mainly by a small group of stakeholders (the initial and broader container) in Phase 1 now need to be discussed, agreed upon, and, finally, owned by a larger number of stakeholders. This may require modifying or adjusting purpose and goals so that all stakeholders can identify the way forward. Clarifying goals is much more than creating a project plan with objectives and sub-objectives. It means exploring how to co-create an emotionally compelling vision that stakeholders can relate to and identify with. It also means thinking about a narrative for the envisaged change and asking: what are the stories of possibilities we will create?” ([Leading Transformative Change Collectively](#), Routledge, 2020, p.85).

i. Aligning goals for climate action in Central Asia



A key opportunity to expand the discussion on climate action in Central Asia and get all actors on the same page is the collective review and revision of the RCCAS Regional Action Plan, due in 2025, along with updates to country NDCs and submission of NAPs, also due in the same year. These need to be inclusive and participatory processes that start above in DCM Phase 1 with raising awareness and resonance among relevant stakeholders at regional and country levels.

The most recent VI Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Heads of State in Astana in August 2024 demonstrates an increasing desire for regional collaboration, including on climate. Specifically, there was a proposal for developing a regional cooperation “Central Asia – 2040 Concept” and a related Roadmap for 2025-2027. This would be the same period for an updated RCCAS Regional Action Plan (RAP), which we recommend being framed as a contribution to this high-level process. Leveraging synergies between these initiatives can enhance coherence, foster greater regional integration, and strengthen climate resilience efforts across Central Asia.

The process of updating the RAP then requires convening high-quality dialogues to collect and integrate stakeholder perspectives on the RCCAS vision and on Joint Regional Priorities to hone goals and start to align resources. Such an approach can build further ownership, credibility, and innovation around concrete initiatives, as well as the bigger vision for climate in Central Asia. As mentioned, linking this process to UNFCCC processes related to NDCs and NAPs is important to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure alignment and impact.

Described below in section 4.c on Planning the Future Together, implementing this process can strengthen the role of existing and emerging structures and platforms, such as a repurposed IRWG as a Regional Stewardship Council (RSC), a Secretariat, a Finance Platform, national Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platforms, and Thematic Working Groups (TWGs).

ii. Addressing national and regional climate cooperation challenges



In the process of clarifying goals and roles for working toward them, **CLI proposes that existing national level challenges to cooperation (see Table 6, above) can be addressed as follows:**

Tab. 13: Proposed interventions for addressing national level climate challenges

Climate cooperation challenges related to:	Proposed interventions
Public sector	• Raise awareness among public servants regarding the crosscutting importance of climate change and build skills for integrating a climate lens into all decision-making and implementation processes • Develop and implement ongoing, targeted capacity building programs for selected public servants on climate change policymaking
Regulatory	• Work with national members of the Regional Stewardship Council (RSC, see section 4.b., below) on regulatory improvements at the national level on climate change • Develop and implement capacity building programs for national-level regulators on improved climate change regulations • Develop a database of “best practices” for climate change regulations and enforcement
Private sector	• Develop a database of “best practice” cases for private sector engagement in climate change actions, projects, and programs • Develop and implement ongoing, targeted trainings for business, business incubators, and business associations on “climate proof” business models
Technology	• Establish climate parks in Central Asian countries that promote climate neutral and positive technologies for investors, companies, and governments to learn about and invest in • Promote technological cooperation and transfer among Central Asian countries and internationally on climate change • Develop a database of climate technologies for further dissemination

Furthermore, CLI proposes that existing gaps in regional level programs and declarations (see Table 2, above) can be addressed as follows:

Tab. 14: Proposed interventions for addressing regional level climate challenges

Regional level challenges on climate change cooperation	Proposed interventions
Existence of collections of projects with no or limited conceptual linkages (e.g. ASBP4)	• Revisit and revise ASBP4 approach under the IFAS Chairmanship of Kazakhstan (which goes through 2027) • Set up a more portfolio-based approach within the ASBP4 format around key climate strategies • Link ASBP4 to the Regional Plan of Action on Environmental Protection in Central Asia (REP4SD-CA)
Existence of conceptual and strategic plans without concrete implementable actions and activities (e.g. REP4SD-CA)	• Develop an implementation concept for the regional plan • Link ASBP4 to the REP4SD-CA • Link the REP4SD-CA to the RCCAS at a strategic level and to the updated Regional Action Plan at the level of the Joint Regional Priorities • Be aware of and seek out synergies with CAREC Institute's Regional Action on Climate Change Strategy
High level political declarations and intentions that often remain on paper	• Offer strategic guidance from the RSC and support from the RCCAS Secretariat in the preparation of such dialogues to help shape the agenda and maintain an action-orientation • Offer advice on implementation mechanisms to help realize the intentions of high-level declarations on climate

iii. Building capacity for achieving goals collectively



Capacity is an essential resource for working toward agreed goals, including both technical knowledge and collaboration capacity. CLI recommends an approach with short-term, mid-term, and long-term phases to ensure that the expertise to build capacity becomes sustainably embedded in Central Asia. The emerging Secretariat, described in section 4.b. on Consolidating Agreements and Establishing Structures, should support capacity building processes, including initial needs assessments and organization of tailored trainings:

Short-term: A series of combined technical and collaboration capacity trainings

- Focused on members of emerging climate action structures and platforms, from the Regional Stewardship Council to the Secretariat to Thematic Working Groups
- Tailored according to the existing strengths and needs of country-specific and regional climate stakeholders, combining technical elements with capacity building for enhanced multi-stakeholder dialogue and results-oriented collaboration
- Beyond technical and collaboration capacity goals, these trainings should be leveraged to build further trust among participants and start to clarify and activate emerging structures, platforms, and related initiatives
- Supported by and through international organizations and bilateral and multilateral projects

Mid-term: Collect and leverage “best practice” examples through implementation

- Design climate action initiatives together with Technical Working Groups by applying knowledge, tools, and approaches learned in above trainings
- Implement concrete climate actions and identify best practices of convening climate action dialogues, implementing climate action initiatives, and developing climate financing tools

- Emerging Secretariat, initially supported by technical assistance, to collect best practice examples
- Organize exchange and learning on national best practices and lessons learned to be shared at the regional level, e.g. among Thematic Working Groups working on the same topics
- Countries to subsequently support the Secretariat in collecting best practices (including for eventual integration into national education and training systems, outlined below in the long-term recommendations)

Long-term: Support national capacity building systems

- Building on above short-term trainings and mid-term cases, embed collaboration capacity by training and certifying a cohort of “Collective Leadership Specialists” in each country, e.g. drawn from RSC and TWG members
- Working closely with respective Ministries of Education, integrate technical training on climate change topics into national education systems through schools, universities, and training centers
- Invest in developing related curricula, syllabi, and handbooks
- Consult and engage those involved in above short- and mid-term efforts as potential trainers and experts

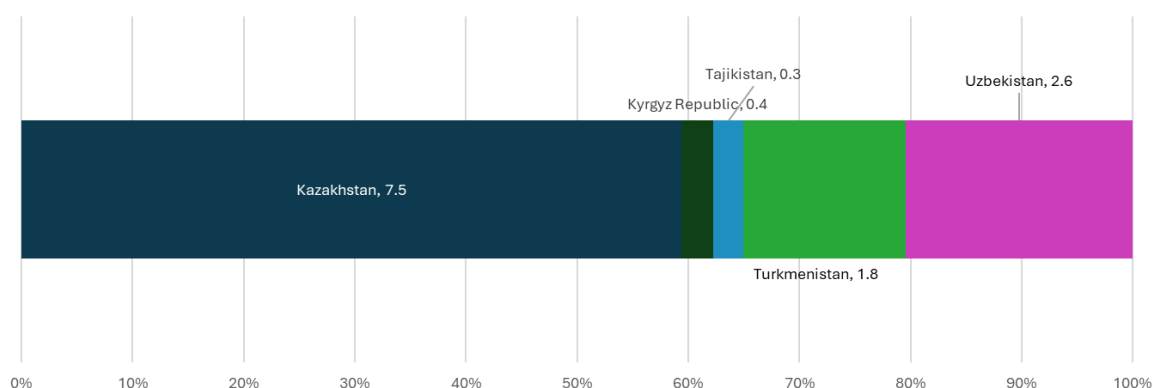
Please see section 4.b. on Consolidating Agreements and Establishing Structures for ideas on a crosscutting Regional Information Hub on Climate Action, which would also play a role related to the above processes for embedding expertise in Central Asia.

iv. Joint resourcing for climate action



There is a clear need for climate mitigation and adaptation financing in Central Asia, totalling some 12.6 billion USD annually and shown by country in Figure 3.

Fig. 4: Estimated annual climate finance need (mitigation and adaptation) in Central Asia (billions of USD)



According to input given entitled [Investment Gap and Climate Inaction in the Water, Agriculture, and Energy Sectors](#) at the “3rd CAREC Climate Policy Dialogue” in April 2024, hosted by the CAREC Institute, the above needs can be described as follows:

Tab. 15: Description of climate financing needs in Central Asia: Investment Gaps

Country	Investment Gaps
Kazakhstan	“Transition to a “Green Economy” by 2050 is around 112 billion USD, 3-4 billion USD annually. 37 billion USD for implementing energy efficiency, 55 billion USD for expanding renewable energy sources and gas infrastructure, 4 billion USD dedicated to the agricultural sector. 50% of its energy comes from renewable sources, with anticipated capital expenditures for water resources reaching up to 10 billion USD by 2030.
Kyrgyzstan	Climate-related loss of 1 billion USD in no-action warning scenarios. The NDC outline climate financing needs, including 7.1 billion USD for energy mitigation, 2 billion USD for water resources adaptation, and various amounts for other sectors, such as agriculture, health, and forestry.
Tajikistan	Climate-related development financing surpassed 1 billion USD over the past decade. The projected funding needed to execute the Green Economy Development Strategy for 2023-2037, focusing on climate-related developmental issues, is estimated at 2.1 billion USD.
Turkmenistan	Sectors in urgent need of investment (e.g. agriculture and education) have received scarce attention. Challenges associated with insufficient productive capital, limited technology and technical expertise, and sector-specific experience.
Uzbekistan	The country’s financial needs for mitigating negative climate impacts on several sectors and decarbonization projects amount to over 220 billion USD in the next four decades, 5.5 billion USD per year.”

For Central Asia as a whole, the report concludes that for a “Business-as-usual scenario aiming at strengthening energy resilience to prevent blackouts and ensure reliable supply, the region would need to invest some 1.407 trillion USD between 2020 and 2050” ([CAREC Institute, 2024](#)). Learn more on this topic in the scoping study “[CAREC 2030: Supporting Regional Action to Address Climate Change](#)” by CAREC Institute.

With the high need for climate financing in Central Asia, there is also a need for greater collaboration among finance partners. Indeed, the development of the RCCAS is not the only initiative in Central Asia related to climate change adaptation. Other donors are also involved in this field and collaboration could enhance impacts, for example among ADB, AA/IKI, UNDP, and the World Bank.

For sustainable resourcing of climate action in Central Asia, finance partners need to shift from a fragmented project-specific mentality to an integrated portfolio-focused one. Instead of moving piece-meal from project to project, a portfolio approach elevates the discussion to ensuring a strategic pipeline of projects at both national and regional levels for robust climate impact.

A Finance Platform for Climate Action in Central Asia could take on this function by drawing on the types of financing in Table 16 for initially resourcing a robust, regional Secretariat and proposed Regional Information Hub. In the longer term, as suggested below, a Central Asia Climate Trust Fund could be established.

Tab. 16: Potential Funding Sources for Climate Action in Central Asia: Regional Secretariat and Knowledge Hub

Type of Financing	Description
Project-based financing (e.g. through GCA)	- Support of operations of the Secretariat - Project development and competition for open calls from other international funding sources
Setting up an international financing mechanism - A Central Asia Climate Trust Fund (e.g. involving AA, ADB, BMZ, EBRD, USAID, WB, etc)	Pooling financial means of IFI's on climate change in a trust fund for implementation of RCCAS
Co-financing: Central Asia countries with international donors	Setting up joint Regional Climate Fund with Central Asian countries for supporting of RCCAS implementation
Receiving support from GCF and other relevant climate financing instruments	Setting up Central Asia Climate Financing revolver fund with support of GCF and other relevant financing mechanism for RCCAS implementation
Cooperation with CAREC Institute and joint financing for Regional Climate Strategy	Coordination and close cooperation, joint implementation of single regional climate strategy with available funds of the CAREC Institute program supported by ADB

In the list below, please find more detail on selected financing instruments:

- **The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute's (CAREC Institute's) Climate Change Strategy** will become a financial mechanism for the more bankable regional projects to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Climate Agreement.
- **The Green Climate Fund (GCF)** committed USD 1.43 billion to support the countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This has unlocked an additional USD 5.45 billion in co-finance, along with more than 59 million USD from the GCF Readiness Program to enhance national systems.
- **The European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+)** is one of the Global Gateway's financing tools. Converging priorities for EU engagement and joint actions exist, offering possibilities to maximise impact.
- **The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Climate Finance for Development Accelerator (CFDA)**, also known as "the Accelerator", is a \$250 million initiative designed to mobilize \$2.5 billion in public and private climate investments by 2030.
- **The Adaptation Fund:** During the accreditation process, each entity will undergo an assessment to make sure it adheres to sound standards and implements effective social and environmental safeguards, identifies any project risks in advance, prevents harm, and improves the effectiveness and sustainability of results.
- **The Loss and Damage Fund:** New funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including responses to economic and non-economic loss and damage related to extreme weather events and slow onset processes.

For a more detailed look at each of the above - including what each fund, the scope of funding, who may apply, and when, please see Annex 5. Please also see the next section for a further discussion on the proposed Finance Platform for Climate Action in Central Asia.

b. Consolidating agreements and establishing structures



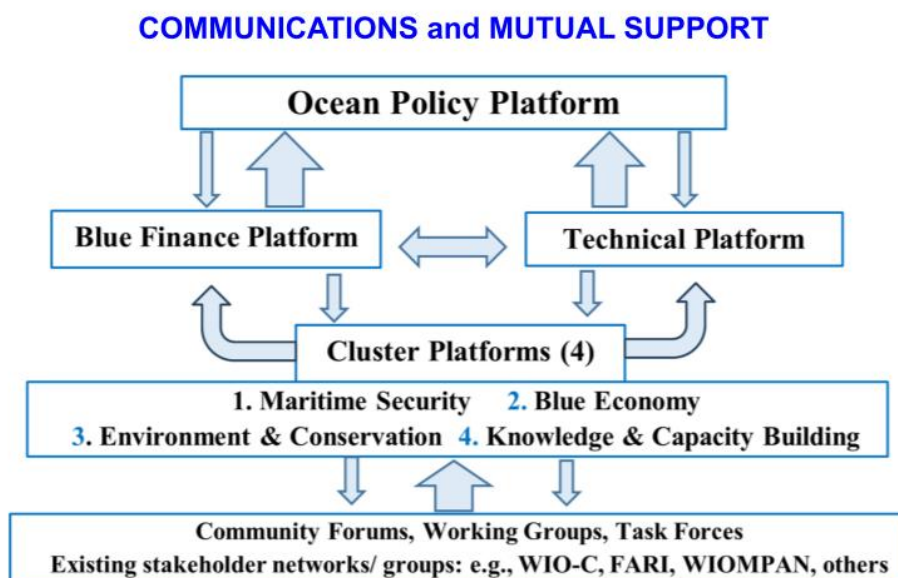
“Phase 2 is the time when multi-stakeholder collaborations need sufficiently contained structures that make joint implementation work. While the process of engagement in Phase 1 is more informal and emergent, it is crucial that this now finds more formal expression in decision-making formats, working groups, and – in complex multi-stakeholder collaborations – governance structures. Stakeholders need to be able to identify with the initiative and find their role in implementation” ([Leading Transformative Change Collectively](#), Routledge, 2020, p.87).

i. An example: Structures for regional ocean governance in the Western Indian Ocean with recommendations for RCCAS structures



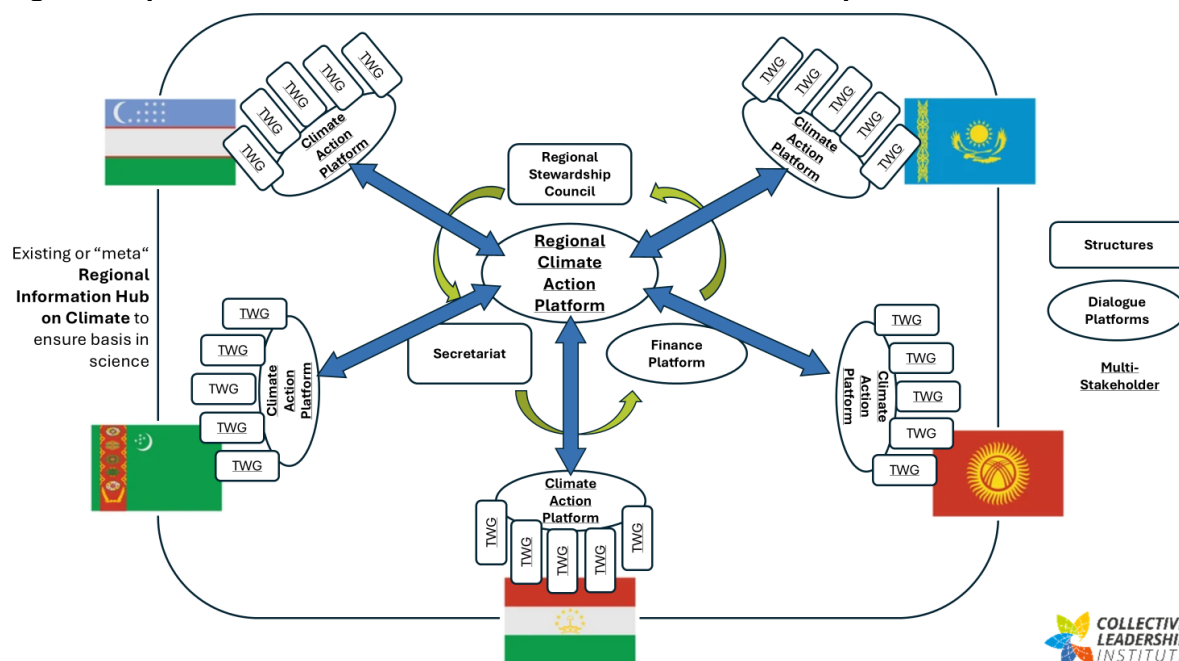
Over the past two and a half years, CLI has been part of the core Support Team that has guided a highly participatory process to co-develop the **Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) among hundreds of regional actors across sectors** (which was approved at the Nairobi Convention’s Conference of Parties in August 2024) as well as co-develop the terms of reference for key, strategic platforms on policy, finance, and technical matters. These ROGS platforms, shown in Figure 4, below, are a useful start for discussions in Central Asia on proposed structures for the RCCAS. The ROGS coordination, communication, and convening function of the Secretariat is represented by the arrows.

Fig. 5: Structures for Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO)



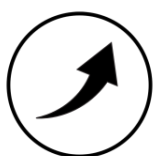
Proposed structures and platforms for RCCAS co-implementation are shown in Figure 5, followed by a comparative text on ROGS and RCCAS structures.

Fig. 6: Proposed Structures and Platforms for RCCAS Co-Implementation



Technical Platform

In the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), the Technical Platform is a regional structure that gathers and manages information to provide actionable advice to the regional Policy Platform. This advice would then be channelled to the 10 WIO countries, various implementing agencies, and the Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties (COP). Supported by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, the Technical Platform is intended to facilitate communication among the four topical Cluster Platforms.



Suggested adaptations for the RCCAS for technically focused structures and platforms:

Since Central Asia consists of 5 (and not 10) countries, with each experiencing climate change impacts in overlapping but unique ways, **we recommend spreading this technical focus and function over 3 levels. From the bottom up, we recommend to:**

- **Establish multi-stakeholder Thematic Working Groups for Climate Action (TWGs)** in each country that focus on the agreed Joint Regional Priorities in the updated RAP, e.g. on water, land, waste, biodiversity, and additional nexus topics such as energy. All TWGs should integrate the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups for a just transition. TWGs should receive technical and collaboration capacity training and should be responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring concrete climate initiatives. They should engage in regular communication and meet as often as they deem necessary for advancing their respective initiatives.
- **Regularly convene the TWGs along with national members of the Regional Stewardship Council (RSC; see next bullet point) as a National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform** with the purpose to exchange and learn, identify synergies across initiatives, align with national policy priorities, and adapt implementation approaches. This platform should meet once each year, in the lead up to a regional-level dialogue (see next bullet point).
- **Annually convene selected national stakeholders from the RSC, the TWGs, as well as the Finance Platform, as a Regional Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform** with the purpose to engage in regional-level exchange, learning, and

monitoring of progress (e.g. among TWGs working on the same topic); identify transboundary and regional collaborations; make proposals for possible strategy adaptations for consideration by the RSC; and learn about financing pipeline opportunities from the Finance Platform. This meeting could happen in tandem with ongoing, annual climate meetings in the region, e.g. the ongoing Central Asia Climate Change Conferences (CACCC).

Policy Platform

In the WIO, the Policy Platform is designed as a high-level policy group for achieving consensus on regional policy advice and coordinating activities across the region. Its primary role is to provide guidance on environmental, social, and economic aspects of ocean governance, ensuring that all other Platforms' inputs are consolidated and communicated to the relevant stakeholders. The Policy Platform is supported by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat in its coordination and communication functions.

The Policy Platform is proposed to directly report to WIO countries, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). It is meant to serve in an advisory capacity, focusing on integrating inputs from various Platforms and providing balanced, comprehensive policy advice. The Platform's membership is proposed to be broad, including representatives from countries, RECs, UNEP, UNECA, the African Union, civil society, and business, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.



Suggested adaptations for the RCCAS for a policy-focused structure:

Having co-developed the RCCAS, the IRWG is the core policy-focused structure for the Strategy. As already suggested by GCA and IRWG members, we support the idea to adapt the name and function of the IRWG (but keep the same core membership) to become a **Regional Stewardship Council for Climate Action (RSC)** with the purpose to:

- Maintain alignment of the RCCAS with national policies;
- Provide strategic guidance for RCCAS co-implementation to national actors; and
- Liaise with the Finance Platform to ensure a robust pipeline of climate initiatives at the national, transboundary, and regional levels.

In 2025, the RSC should meet virtually every quarter, including an extended portion of the meeting dedicated to meeting with the Finance Platform, discussed below. Furthermore, RSC members should attend their respective National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform dialogues in person, as well as work closely with the Secretariat to prepare and convene the annual Regional Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform meeting, described above.

Financial Platform

In the WIO, the Finance Platform is an emerging forum for continuous dialogue between countries, RECs, potential investors, and financial partners involved in blue finance. The Platform is meant to identify affordable blue finance for implementing ROGS priorities by assembling a comprehensive blue investment portfolio and promoting a blue investment taxonomy, while keeping up with a rapidly evolving financial landscape. It is meant to engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including those from within and outside the WIO region, such as financial institutions, bilateral partners, and private investors. The WIO ROGS Secretariat will require substantial technical expertise and resources to manage ongoing Finance Platform dialogues, help develop the regional blue portfolio and establish working groups under the Finance Platform to address specific challenges.



Suggested adaptations for the RCCAS for a financing-focused platform:

CLI proposes that the approach being applied in the WIO could also be applied in Central Asia. We recommend to establish a **Finance Platform for Climate Action in Central Asia** among key donors, financial institutions, and investors to collaborate closely with the RSC and the Secretariat with the purpose to:

- Regularly review and update climate change finance needs at both national and regional levels;
- Map out potential financing sources according to a matrix (or “taxonomy”) by climate sector and by regional, transboundary, and country levels;
- Present this mapping to interested donors and investors as a climate action portfolio; and
- Enhance cooperation among finance partners with a focus on ensuring a pipeline of climate action projects in the region

As in the WIO, this Platform will require significant support from the RCCAS Secretariat, described in the next section. Additionally, we suggest that it would be useful to consider inviting and/or cooperating with the Astana International Finance Center in this endeavour.

Key elements of the ToRs for ROGS platforms are in the [Regional Ocean Governance Strategy Document](#) approved by Nairobi Convention Focal Points in August 2024, specifically Section 8 on “Institutional Mechanisms,” pages 39-45. Learn more about the process on the [Nairobi Convention Secretariat webpage](#).

ii. A Regional Secretariat for Climate Action



In drawing on the example of regional ocean governance in the WIO, above, an important difference should be noted. The ROGS benefits from the established Nairobi Convention and attendant Nairobi Convention Secretariat that is hosted by UNEP. GEF funding plays a significant role in supporting this secretarial function. The need for a professional and well-resourced

Secretariat is also important in the context of co-implementation of the RCCAS in Central Asia.

CLI recommends to establish a robust and professional Secretariat for Climate Action at the regional level with at least one staff person from each Central Asian country with the purpose to:

- **Communicate:** Provide relevant, concise, and regular communication among emerging RCCAS structures, especially at regional level; encourage and support communication among national level stakeholders;
- **Convene:** Take the lead in convening regional level RCCAS dialogues and support national stakeholders in convening their respective dialogues, e.g. among emerging TWGs as they contribute to an updated RAP;
- **Organize capacity building:** Take the lead in understanding the needs of RCCAS actors and organize technical and collaboration capacity building trainings for members of emerging RCCAS structures, especially the TWGs;
- **Coordinate:** Once the RAP is updated, take the lead in coordinating regional level activities and encourage the implementation of national level initiatives; and
- **Manage knowledge and report:** Take the lead in process knowledge management, with active involvement of other actors. Establish a digital Climate Action Portal to support the Secretariat in this function that is accessible to all RCCAS actors and organized by strategic and thematic topics. The RSC, TWGs, and the Secretariat

should actively use the Portal for the purpose of documenting exchange and learning, monitoring implementation and progress, and collecting best practices and success stories.

Please see more on monitoring and evaluation in section 4.c. on Planning the Future Together.

Form follows function. CLI is aware that GIZ's GCA program has been requested by the IRWG to host a virtual RCCAS Secretariat with a 3-person staff for the coming year. We think much can be learned through this virtual approach; it could turn out to be quite an effective innovation for the region! CLI does recommend, however, identifying additional funding and/or funders to ensure at least 1 staff person from each country. This is for two reasons: (1) The role needed of the Secretariat is expansive and needs a bigger team and (2) We anticipate that countries will feel more at ease if they are "represented" in the Secretariat. That said, staff should not be appointed, but selected through an open and transparent application process based on merit and motivation.

Note: During the Development Partner Consultation convened by CLI, an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) representative signalled interest in offering short-term, project-based support for the RCCAS Secretariat. CLI urges GCA to pursue this possibility, requesting that OECD funds additional staff positions for the duration of the coming Regional Action Plan cycle of 2025-2027.

Going forward - depending on stakeholder preferences and available resources - these are **hosting options for the RCCAS Secretariat:**

Tab. 17: Hosting Options for the RCCAS Secretariat

1. Light version (Permanent, integrated within existing structures)	2. Fully-fledged Secretariat (Permanent, stand-alone for RCCAS)	3. Operational Secretariat (Temporary – for project cycle)
• An independent, internationally recruited head of the Secretariat • Secretariat becomes part of the hosting organization's function • Secretariat will mainly fulfil communication and coordination functions • Implementation and monitoring distributed/ delegated to other partners	• A full, stand-alone Secretariat team, hosted/ located within one of the regional or international institutions • Secretariat will be an independent unit within the hosting institute with its own staff and operational freedom • Secretariat will be responsible for all of the functions listed above	• GCA hosts the Secretariat within a project timeline • Secretariat will be part of the GCA team but focused on RCCAS implementation • With a sufficient staff in place, the Secretariat will be responsible for all of the functions listed above • Otherwise, an independent entity will conduct monitoring and evaluation of RCCAS
• Example: Blue Peace for Central Asia Secretariat (funded by SDC, hosted by CAREC Eco)	• Example: CAMP4ASB Secretariat (funded by WB, hosted by CAREC Eco)	• Example: Secretariat for Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia project (funded by AA, hosted by GIZ as part of Berlin Process)

CLI would caution against option 3 because of concerns about sustainability and ownership beyond project timelines. If option 1 or 2 is desired, it is possible that there is no ideal,

existing regional institution to host the Secretariat; neither of the top two options, CAREC Eco nor IFAS, are perfect. Please see an assessment of potential hosts in Table 18, below.

Tab. 18: Potential Hosts of RCCAS Secretariat: Pros and Cons

Potential hosts	Positive aspects	Negative aspects
IFAS system - EC IFAS, SIC ICWC or ICSD Secretariat	• Ownership by member states • Access to high-level decision-making at the regional and national level • Use of existing institutional infrastructure and arrangements • Coordination with existing and emerging cooperation at the regional level	• Slow decision-making and bureaucratic barriers • Kyrgyzstan has “frozen” its IFAS membership • Unsustainable institutional environment (change of management) • Low staff capacity
CAREC Eco – Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia	• Previous experience of hosting Secretariat roles for CAMP4ASB, Blue Peace • Less politicized and more project implementation focused • Physical presence in all member countries • Existing and previous program on climate change	• Change of management • Low staff capacity • Financing instability due to project-based working approach
DKU - German Kazakh University	• Linked closely to international partners, especially initiatives of Germany, EU • Strong ties with academic and research communities of Central Asia • Staffed with well-trained and young experts • Climate change focus: With a Center and projects	• No physical presence in the countries, except Kazakhstan • Pure academic and research focus • Limited staffing committed to the work due to dense academic and research activities
Green Central Asia project, GIZ	• Synergies and exchange with climate-related projects of GIZ • Presence in all Central Asian countries • Expertise and staff • Impartiality and international standing	• Limited ownership • Lacks long-term sustainability

Regarding such regional institutions, please also see an Institutional Assessment of Regional Entities and their potential role in climate-related topics in Annex 6.

iii. A Regional Information Hub for Climate Action



There are existing climate-related data sources and platforms in Central Asia, e.g. the [Centre for a Regional Climate Action Transparency Hub in Central Asia](#) (under ICAT) and the [Information Portal on Climate Adaptation and Mitigation in Central Asia](#) (CACIP). Such platforms contain very valuable data, but often remain fragmented. **A Regional Information Hub for Climate Action (the Hub) could play an essential “meta” role in harmonising**

accessible, reliable, and up-to-date regional climate data. By introducing digital climate data platforms and online data systems, the Hub could contribute to the improvement of climate-related research to inform planning and implementation of climate-related projects, as well as technical capacity building. In this way, the Hub encompasses **data compilation and analysis, knowledge sharing, and a basis for technical capacity building**, all aimed at providing a scientific basis for climate action in Central Asia.

CLI recommends to consolidate a Regional Information Hub for Climate Action at the regional level with the purpose to:

- **Compile and analyse data:** Build skills and provide services to partner organizations, helping them compile and synthesize data from their activities into useful knowledge products. These products should inform policy development and practical solutions to address climate challenges.
- **Share knowledge:** Share climate change-related know-how effectively across regional organizations, ensure collaboration and exchange of insights, and enable open access to research results and solutions produced by Central Asian organizations, promoting transparency and global sharing of climate knowledge.
- **Build capacity:** Offer advice to national programs and organizations on developing the skills needed to capture, synthesize, and share technical findings effectively. This guidance should help ensure that scientific results and field-level practices are widely disseminated and applied.

The following steps are recommended as priorities for the Hub's initial implementation:

- **Review existing knowledge and skills:** Assess the current state of climate change data, knowledge, and expertise available across Central Asia, both at the regional and national levels.
- **Develop a climate knowledge catalogue:** Create an open-access meta-database that compiles and organizes available climate knowledge sources and platforms, making them easily accessible.
- **Coordinate with existing climate platforms:** Climate knowledge platforms such as CACIP, ICAT, those established under the GCA-Berlin Process (e.g. [Regional Research Network on Water in Central Asia](#)), and the CAREC Institute Platform.
- **Conduct regular climate knowledge gap analysis:** Implement a system to regularly identify and update knowledge gaps for member countries and partners.
- **Support the development of an open-access, web-based knowledge platform:** Provide ongoing support to develop the RCCAS's web-based platform, integrating both existing knowledge systems and new knowledge based on the knowledge gap analysis.

iv. Transparency in emerging RCCAS structures



Transparency instruments should be embedded in existing and emerging RCCAS structures. The current Strategy makes little mention of such instruments, as it does not yet go into detail describing implementation structures.

We encourage involved actors to take an active part in designing the proposed structures and platforms, above, with special attention to ensuring transparency in:

- Decision-making, especially that of the RSC
- Finance and funding, especially regarding the Finance Platform

- Communication, coordination, and reporting, especially regarding the Secretariat and Thematic Working Groups, as well as planning for and results of national and regional level dialogues

c. Planning the future together



“In Phase 2, the joint vision development needs to be followed by the co-development of implementation strategies and agreed-upon plans” ([Leading Transformative Change Collectively](#), Routledge, 2020, p.86).

i. Recommendations for planning the future together



A key opportunity for genuine, multi-stakeholder engagement and dialogue that would **lay a foundation for collective action is reviewing and updating the RCCAS Regional Action Plan (RAP) together in 2025. In this process, CLI recommends using an inclusive, bottom-up, and participatory approach in each country, culminating at the regional level:**

- **The emerging Secretariat, with support from GCA and the RSC members, is encouraged to organize country-specific technical dialogues** on each current RAP priority topic (land, water, and waste, plus biodiversity, energy, and the crosscutting priority to work alongside and support vulnerable groups). Building on the stakeholder lists for each country (*see the CLI Engagement Mission Report, in Annex 2*), prepare for each dialogue with an extensive, thematic stakeholder mapping that makes a special effort to be inclusive of women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Convening stakeholders in this way with thematic expertise and experience represent the first, informal dialogues of emerging Thematic Working Groups.
- **These dialogues should culminate in a participatory meeting of the respective National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform in each country**, convened by the respective RSC members with support from the Secretariat, with each TWG reporting back on their priorities, listening to others, finding further synergies using a nexus approach, and adapting initiatives into a national contribution to an updated RAP.
- **RSC members and selected TWG members from each country should then attend a first meeting of the Regional Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform** to share with their counterpart TWGs, learn how other countries are integrating nexus approaches, and making final adaptations to a fully revised RAP. At the regional dialogue, time should also be dedicated to articulating a broader vision for climate action in Central Asia, enhancing ownership and resonance for the onward collaboration journey.
- **Following the regional dialogue, the RSC should fully review, adapt, and formally approve an updated RAP**, encouraging implementation at regional and country levels.

This approach and other recommendations in this Feasibility Study build on the RCCAS RAP’s reference to the water-energy nexus (under the Joint Regional Priority on water) and integrate the three overarching recommendations made in the report on [“Benefits of regional co-operation on the energy-water-land use nexus transformation in Central Asia”](#)¹³ published by OECD in 2022:

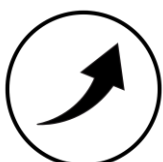
- “Mainstream the nexus principles into development planning processes

¹³ Botta, E., M. Griffiths and T. Kato (2022), “Benefits of regional co-operation on the energy-water-land use nexus transformation in Central Asia”, OECD Green Growth Papers, No. 2022/01, OECD Publishing, Paris.

- Finance pilot projects to demonstrate benefits of investments in the nexus
- Organise regional policy dialogues and facilitate capacity development”

Water, energy, and land systems pose interlinked challenges and opportunities in Central Asia and should be addressed in concert.

ii. Monitoring participation, activities, results, and impact



Monitoring inclusivity and participation: Vulnerable groups and sectors

Effectively monitoring of inclusivity and participation includes both quantitative and qualitative elements. CLI suggests monitoring inclusivity quantitatively using participant lists from all RCCAS-related meetings (e.g. TWG meetings to RSC meetings) related to gender, age, and sector (government, civil society, academia, private sector, and development cooperation). Furthermore, each country needs to define how it understands (and tracks) “vulnerable groups”. This quantitative assessment should also be complemented with selected, qualitative interviews or surveys to understand the quality of participation. Are vulnerable groups only present or are they also heard, respected, and able to contribute in meaningful ways?

Monitoring activities, results, and impacts of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan

In this case, quantitative assessment is sufficient, but still relies heavily on the participation of Thematic Working Groups. Please find three options for such monitoring in Table 19.

Tab. 19: Options for Monitoring and Evaluating Activities, Results, and Impacts

	Options for who conducts M&E	Description
1	Set up an M&E unit within the Secretariat	• Develop an assessment framework • Collect regular information on RCCAS progress • Provide regular update on RCCAS progress assessment to Secretariat and Regional Stewardship Council
2	Set up an independent RCCAS assessment working group , including representatives of major stakeholder groups	• Train and equip the working group with methodology and indicators for impact assessment • Conduct regular assessments of the RCCAS (at a frequency determined by the RSC and Secretariat) • Prepare reports on RCCAS monitoring and evaluation for the RSC and Secretariat
3	Recruit an independent (international) M&E group or expert(s)	• Develop ToR and open a call for developing and implementation of M&E system for RCCAS • Recruit M&E company or expert(s) • Receive regular M&E reports from the recruited team/expert(s)

iii. Monitoring collaboration quality with the Collective Leadership Compass



More than 200 participants in CLI's Engagement Mission were introduced to using CLI's Collective Leadership Compass as a model for assessing the quality of collaboration, or "aliveness" of their emerging collaboration ecosystem for climate action in Central Asia.

Attention to the quality of stakeholder processes can help increase trust, build ownership, encourage creative solutions, and lead to more robust results.

Participant feedback showed that many found the tool helpful, as assessing strengths and development areas in the stakeholder system can inform planning.

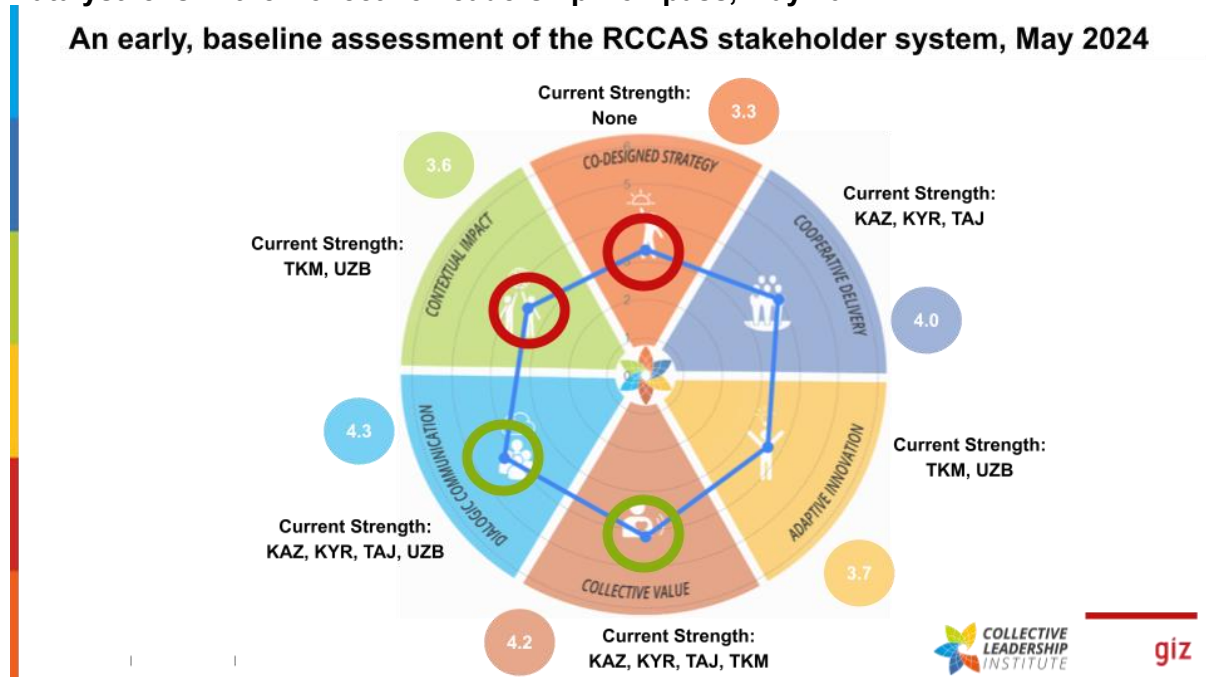
During CLI's Regional RCCAS Dialogue, the synthesis assessment of all 5 country-level assessments was shared, using a specific lens in the Compass called the "Collaboration Catalysts", which focuses on enlivening multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Collaboration Catalysts are described in Figure 6.

Fig. 7: The "Collaboration Catalysts" lens in the Collective Leadership Compass



The average pattern of all 5 countries in Figure 7 provides initial insights into the quality of collaboration on climate at the regional level. The pattern shows strengths circled in green and development areas circled in red, plus current, country level strengths noted around the outside. The assessment used a scale from 1 ("not at all true") to 6 ("fully true").

Fig. 8: Baseline assessment of the RCCAS stakeholder system using the Collaboration Catalyst lens in the Collective Leadership Compass, May 2024



In general, the values show that the RCCAS process is off to a good start, but also needs to engage all stakeholders for the collaboration journey ahead. Below, we interpret the results related to each Collaboration Catalyst, from lowest to highest score.

Co-Designed Strategy – 3.3: “All relevant stakeholders drive strategy and implementation”

- From a government perspective, the RCCAS was “co-designed” because the development process involved and reached consensus among all 5 Central Asia countries, no small feat! From the perspective of civil society and academia who were not engaged in this process, however, the RCCAS is seen as the result of a high-level political process. Indeed, no countries identified this Catalyst as a current strength.

Contextual Impact – 3.6: “Change has relevance for stakeholder system and is embedded in larger transformations”

- While the RCCAS makes reference to international instruments for climate change adaptation and, indeed, was approved at the UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai, this Catalyst likely scored low because implementation has not started in earnest and “change” is not yet visible. Only 2 of the 5 Central Asian countries identified this Catalyst as a current strength.

Adaptive Innovation – 3.7: “Transformation prototypes are co-created and attention paid to emergent opportunities”

- This Catalyst can refer both to technical and social innovations in pursuing climate change adaptation. As these are best prototyped, tested, and adapted through implementation, this Catalyst also scored low and only 2 of the 5 Central Asian countries identified it as a current strength.

Cooperative Delivery – 4.0: “Ownership and result-orientation are ensured through high-quality stakeholder engagement processes”

- From a government perspective, there is a high level of ownership that was built through the RCCAS development process. Civil society and academia stakeholders

also indicated that they strongly support the Strategy. This Catalyst is also probably among those that scored well because of the inclusive, transparent, and participatory nature of CLI's Engagement Mission that participants were experiencing in real-time. Three of the 5 Central Asian countries identified this Catalyst as a current strength.

Collective Value – 4.2: “The collaboration creates value for all stakeholders through balanced influence and integration of weaker stakeholders”

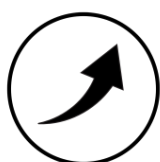
- This Catalyst scored among the top two current strengths, probably because participants understand climate change adaptation as a crosscutting and complex issue that relates to a broad range of stakeholders. Addressing this topic well can create value for all involved, including vulnerable groups. As part of CLI's consultation and dialogue process, stakeholders were also experiencing – perhaps for the first time for some – an attempt at balancing influence by inviting and respecting a full range of voices and perspectives. Four of the 5 Central Asian countries identified this Catalyst as a current strength.

Dialogic Communication – 4.3: “Communication architectures acknowledge diversity and create cohesion and networks”

- It is important that this Catalyst scored among the top two current strengths, because it indicates that participants see the RCCAS process moving toward greater inclusion of diverse stakeholders, as well as high quality dialogue among those stakeholders. This can and should help build greater cohesion and networks among an emerging RCCAS collaboration ecosystem in Central Asia. Four of the 5 Central Asian countries identified this Catalyst as a current strength.

Reflecting on such results together can help all involved actors develop a shared understanding of the quality of collaboration in implementation of the RCCAS, as well as adapt planning by leveraging strengths and enhancing areas in need of development.

iv. Recommendations for a monitoring and evaluating approach



CLI recommends to develop and agree to an approach to collectively monitor inclusivity and participation, as well as activities, results, impacts, and process quality as a basis for moving into DCM Phase 3 on “Implementing and Evaluating”:

- **Monitoring of inclusivity and participation** should be conducted by the Secretariat, with support from national level stakeholders, on an annual basis. Reporting should be transparent and communicated publicly, including on participation by stakeholder group, gender, age, and vulnerable group (as defined by each country).
- **Monitoring of activities, results, and impacts** should take a bottom-up approach, with respective TWGs reporting on their initiatives through National Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platforms, with results consolidated and communicated to the Secretariat and RSC for further integration and analysis. This should also occur on an annual basis and be made public.
- **Monitoring of process quality** should be conducted with the Collective Leadership Compass' “Collaboration Catalyst” lens, based on experience that high quality processes are more likely to deliver robust results. This can be useful at different levels, e.g.:
 - TWGs can assess and adapt very specific climate action initiatives by noticing their own stakeholder system's strengths and areas in need of further development

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- National level actors can assess climate collaborations as a whole at the country level, e.g. at a meeting of their Multi-Stakeholder Climate Action Platform
- A synthesized version of all country-level assessments can serve as a regional-level picture and may be useful for the RSC in their strategic guidance function, building on strengths and addressing areas in need of further development

5. Concluding Words

In closing, we wish to reiterate our gratitude to the more than 200 climate actors in Central Asia who made this Study possible. Meeting each of you was an enormous privilege and we were inspired by your commitment to a resilient climate future for Central Asia! You have convinced us that there is great potential for moving towards this vision collectively, especially if inclusive, multi-stakeholder approaches are embraced, resources for a portfolio of climate initiatives are expanded and diversified, and initial, concrete results are shared and celebrated to further increase momentum! All of the observations and recommendations in this Feasibility Study are offered in the spirit of collaboration. We hope that you find them useful and further adapt them for strategic climate action in your countries. We welcome any follow-up discussions or opportunities to support your onward collaborations and wish you every success!

6. Annexes

Please find all Annex materials [here](#), including:

- **Annex 1:** Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (RCCAS) for Central Asia: A Short Overview
- **Annex 2:** CLI Engagement Mission to Central Asia Report
- **Annex 3:** Review of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- **Annex 4:** Stakeholders at Regional and National Levels
- **Annex 5:** Funding Review for RCCAS
- **Annex 6:** Assessment of Regional Entities: Role in Climate-Related Topics

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