

Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia

Context

The drylands and high mountains of Central Asia are home to diverse ecosystems, but due to the scarcity of forests, pastures, soil and water in the area, these ecosystems are increasingly being overused, which is posing threats to biodiversity. Climate change exacerbates the situation by causing further degradation of natural resources, resulting in a decrease in ecosystem services and productivity, as well as an increased vulnerability of different land use systems. Moreover, the vulnerable rural populations, reliant on these resources, find themselves at heightened risk.

Despite having established legal and strategic frameworks for sustainable land use in the past decade, Central Asian countries continue to face challenges in effectively implementing reform processes within the land use sector. This struggle primarily arises from the limited capacity of state administrations. Although national strategies for forest and pasture management, biodiversity conservation, climate change, and agricultural reforms have been developed, regional collaboration concerning shared ecosystems, forest and pasture management, and cross-border protected areas remains in its early stages.

Our objective

Integrative land use approaches are being mainstreamed in Central Asian countries.

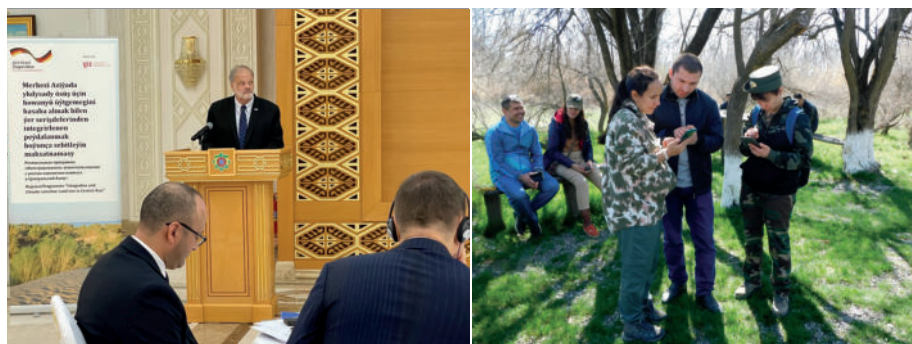
Our measures

The regional programme on Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia (ILUCA) represents the most recent addition to a series of projects implemented by GIZ since 2008.

Programme name	Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Programme region	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
Main partners	Kazakhstan – Forestry and Wildlife Committee, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. Kyrgyzstan – Forest Service, Ministry of Agriculture. Tajikistan – Committee for Environmental Protection and the Agency for Forestry. Turkmenistan – Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection. Uzbekistan – Forestry Agency, Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change
Duration	03.2021 - 02.2025

It adopts a comprehensive approach to tackle various challenges associated with inappropriate forest and pasture management, protected area management, land degradation and the loss of ecosystem services. The programme operates with local population and state bodies, non-governmental and regional organizations, to ensure a holistic and effective response to these issues.

Integrative and climate-sensitive land use management requires considering socio-economic, institutional, financial, cultural, and environmental aspects. The programme team and experts support representatives of authorities, local state administrations and non-governmental organizations and local communities to employ different approaches in addressing the complex dimensions of land use management. This collection of practices called the Integrative Land Use Management Approaches (ILUMA) was successfully tested in Central Asia



L. to r.: The essay competition and one-day class on environmental aspects for junior youth school students in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan – December 2022.

Training on the creation of an audio guide in Tashkent, Uzbekistan – March 2023.

Pg 4: Second Central Asian Forum “Regional cooperation to foster low emissions and climate resilient development in Central Asia” in Almaty, Kazakhstan – November, 2022.

Training on pistachio management for forestry service employees in Khuroson district, Tajikistan – June 2023.

for more than 10 years. They are based on the understanding of landscapes as ecosystems comprising environmental, human, cultural, technological and institutional dimensions that differ across regions. ILUMA provide a conceptual framework and tools for effective knowledge management and dissemination. It encompasses eight dimensions (see Figure 1) that should be considered to varying extents when planning, designing, and implementing land use measures.



Figure 1: Dimensions of the Integrative Land Use Management Approach (ILUMA)

Our team assists respective ministries, state agencies and committees in revising, applying, and implementing existing policies, strategies, and laws. We support better collaboration between and within sectoral and intersectoral working groups, offering our expertise, improving monitoring systems, providing targeted training, and enhancing capacity development initiatives.

Our experts also advise state bodies in countries on improving monitoring and reporting systems towards international commitments, such as Bonn Challenge, Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Initiative of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Nationally Determined Contributions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

We empower the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) to integrate environmentally friendly land use concerns into dialogues with national governments through the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD). Our collaboration with ICSD includes capacity building of its members, providing guidance in programme development, and project proposal support. This aligns with the German government's "Green Central Asia" initiative for climate adaptation strategies.

We improve knowledge and collaboration of the civil society organizations and independent experts within the Green Regional Environmental Expert Network of Central Asia (GREEN CA). This platform promotes knowledge sharing, and capacity development across the region on environmentally friendly land use, development of food and agriculture systems, ecosystem management.

Together with ILUCA, GREEN CA is conducting a third iteration of the Lead the Change Programme and develops training modules for integrative and climate-sensitive land use which are integrated in colleges and universities across Central Asia, aimed at changing curricula towards more integrative and climate-sensitive content.

GREEN CA is a community that brings together organizations and independent experts from Central Asia, whose activities affect various fields of interaction between the economy and the environment.

Regional cooperation plays a vital role in ensuring the environmentally friendly use of shared natural resources and ecosystems across Central Asian countries. We work to improve regional cooperation in this context, promoting effective implementation of integrative land use approaches in transboundary protected areas and watersheds.

Selected results and impacts

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan improved transboundary cooperation on biodiversity conservation and jointly developed a road map and audio guides for Zarafshan National Park. Exchange visits and joint planning sessions helped enhance collaboration.

The Bonn Challenge, launched by the Government of Germany and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2011, is a global initiative to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. In 2018, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan pledged to restore over 2.5 million ha of forest landscape by 2030.



L. to r.: Installation of camera traps for animals to monitor their movements in Chon Kemin, Kyrgyzstan – July 2023.

A Regional Seminar initiated by the ICSD dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan – June 2023.

During workshops and trainings, participants from Central Asian countries shared best practices in pistachio forest management, exchanged knowledge among institutions and farmers enabling them to stay up-to-date with the latest advancements in the field.

Respective state bodies and institutions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan improved their reporting process for the Bonn Challenge Initiative. They actively participated in dialogue platforms, worked on data collection using modern methods. The Barometer Tool under the Bonn Challenge Initiative enables the monitoring of restoration and fulfillment of commitments taken by each country.

The GREEN CA Network continues to grow, attracting new members and positioning itself as a regional expert network that offers valuable services to a range of different stakeholders. Its members possess regional knowledge and expertise, enabling them to effectively communicate complex topics such as climate change in a local context and address regional challenges collectively.

The Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) actively participated in the development of a regional climate change adaptation strategy which aims to prioritize integrative land use in Central Asia and ensure its inclusion in regional development processes. With our programme's assistance, the countries have successfully developed and adopted the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development (REAP4SD). It includes the establishment of relevant indicators, a roadmap, and a monitoring system.

In Kazakhstan

- Updated national rules on financial support for private afforestation activities have led to increased private sector involvement in tree planting. The state commits to enhancing reforestation and expanding forested areas.
- The government has established by-laws under “The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Flora” to promote conservation and a balanced use of natural plant resources. These by-laws clarify rights and obligations for individuals and legal entities.

In Kyrgyzstan

- Kyrgyzstan has become a member of the Asian Forestry Cooperation Organization (AFOCO). This membership provides the country with access to valuable international knowledge, best practices, and financial resources. The collaboration with AFOCO supports capacity building in forestry services and enhances the resilience of forests in the face of climate change.
- A Kyrgyzstan-specific agroforestry guideline has been developed, taking into account integrative land use management approaches. This guideline will undergo a pilot phase in three state forestry enterprises.
- Kyrgyzstan has been granted approval for a project proposal by the Green Climate Fund Readiness. This endorsement signifies the country's dedication to tackling climate change and promoting sustainable development.

In Tajikistan

- A national guideline on environmentally friendly management and increased production of pistachio has been established. It covers planting methods, maintenance, and recommendations for implementing integrative land use management approaches within forestry.
- Tajikistan received endorsement of a Green Climate Fund Readiness project proposal which demonstrates the commitment to addressing climate change and sustainable development. The proposal incorporates integrative land use aspects, recognizing the crucial role of land management in climate resilience and mitigation efforts.

In Turkmenistan

- Comprehensive analysis and review were conducted on Turkmenistan's national documents, legislative framework, and institutional framework concerning Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. This analysis will enable the establishment of effective monitoring systems for both national and sub-national indicators, facilitating ongoing tracking and evaluation of progress towards LDN goals.



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In Uzbekistan

- Staff of protected areas and national park administration of Uzbekistan improved their knowledge and skills in implementing measures on public awareness and promoting eco-tourism activities.
- State forest enterprises disseminate best practices on integrative land use approaches (nurseries with fast growing good variety of pistachio seedlings, improvement of condition of existing pistachio trees and combination with other crops/ medical herbs).

An example from the field



Alexandra Zaslavskaya, a passionate researcher at Zarafshan National Park, was excited when she first heard about the audio guide on the National Park. Intrigued by the potential of incorporating new technologies into her work, she immediately saw the possibilities it offered.

For Alexandra, the audio guide's greatest advantage lies in its ability to cater to different groups of users, including children, students, and tourists. This wide-ranging appeal ensures that everyone who visits the National Park can find the information they seek. Moreover, by utilizing audio guides on mobile devices, the exhibition becomes more accessible to visitors with disabilities.

Recognizing the accessibility and engaging nature of the audio guide, Alexandra decided to use it during extra-curricular activities for children in local schools. Once a month, she conducts sessions where the audio guide becomes an integral part of teaching. As Alexandra explains, "It's not just an interesting format, but an opportunity to teach schoolchildren from an early age to love nature and take care of the environment."

Beyond delivering valuable information, the audio guide also plays a role in promoting and supporting local businesses. It serves as a source of motivation for local individuals to actively participate in conservation initiatives and provides opportunities for their involvement. Additionally, the audio guide acts as a catalyst for potential regional collaborations, laying the foundation for exciting new prospects in ecotourism within the Central Asian region in the future.

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