

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.

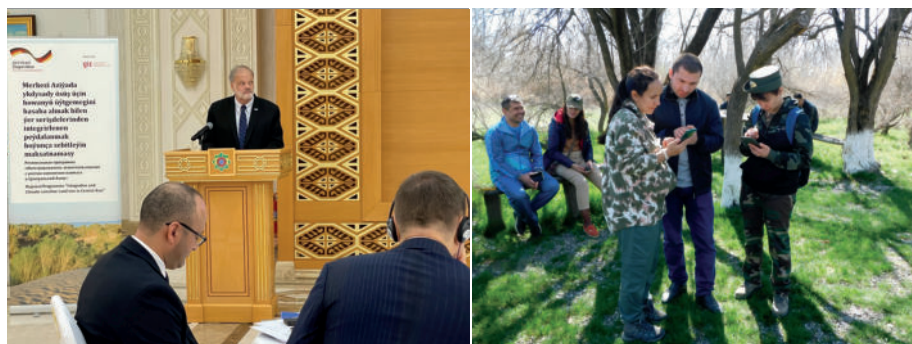
Our measures

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 – Committee of Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources; Kyrgyzstan – Forest Service under the Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision, Climate Finance Center; Tajikistan – State Committee for Environmental Protection and the Agency for Forestry; Turkmenistan – Ministry of Environmental Protection; Uzbekistan – Forestry Agency, Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change
Duration	03.2021 – 12.2025

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



L. to r.: One-day workshop on environmental issues for junior 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.

Approaches (ILUMA) was successfully tested in Central Asia 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.

State bodies in countries receive expert's advises 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).

Another focus of the programme's work is on providing support to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in getting access to climate finance

through the Green Climate Fund's Readiness Programme. Measures include bolstering their capacities to implement national climate priorities and solutions aligned with their climate action plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts (called Nationally Determined Contribution - NDC) and with the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We continue to help 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 improvement of skills and knowledge of its members, providing guidance in programme development, and project proposal support.

Knowledge exchange and collaboration of civil society organizations and independent experts is crucial, and for this the Green Regional Environmental Expert Network of Central Asia (GREEN CA) was created. This platform promotes knowledge sharing, and capacity development across the region on environmentally friendly land use, development of food and agriculture systems, and ecosystem management.

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

Our results to date

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.

Also Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan jointly developed an action plan for monitoring wildlife species in Zaili Alatau range of the Northern Tien Shan. Partner organizations are going to scale up this practice at the Kara-Buura State Natural Park in Kyrgyzstan and Aksu-Zhabagly Nature Reserve in Kazakhstan.

Following these successful measures on transboundary cooperation four countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – are integrating the new Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool or adopting joint monitoring guidelines.

Moreover, respective state bodies and institutions in these countries 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.



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.

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 ICSD actively participated in the development of a regional climate change adaptation strategy. 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.

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

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). It gives the country valuable international knowledge, best practices, and financial resources. For instance, the country secured AFOCO funding to build a seed storage facility.
- 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.

- Functional Zoning guidelines have been successfully tested in five forest enterprises of the State Forest Fund land and have been approved by the Forest Service’s order. The land zoning facilitates integrative land use planning.
- 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.
- Tajikistan updated the Red Book, which is one of the main documents for biodiversity conservation. It provides information for conservation practitioners and decision makers to better protect key species.

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.
- Turkmenistan operationalised by-laws of the Forest Code, which will help apply the provisions of the law in terms of harm recovery fees and payment of damages, governing the use of land in the forest sector of the country.



Daniel Gerecke,
daniel.gerecke@giz.de,
Phone + 996 312 90 93 40

■ 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).

- Uzbekistan developed analyses and models on forest land restoration on the territories of the State Forest Lands. They became founding ground in attracting funds for land restoration under one of the World Bank's project.

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.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
(German federal enterprise for international cooperation)

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Regional programme "Integrative and Climate-sensitive
Land Use in Central Asia"
22, Erkindik Blvd.
720040 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Phone + 996 312 90 93 40
www.giz.de, www.landuse-ca.org

As at July 2024

Printed by

Design Aleksandra Ustinova, Bishkek

Photo credits

Programme archive: pages 1,3,4

Text

Daniel Gerecke, Aichurek Zhunusova

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

German Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)