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# USAID/CENTRAL ASIA ENVIRONMENT AND WATER FACT SHEET

## OUR STRATEGY

Water resources management is one of the more complex challenges in the region. The five countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), struggle to balance their limited water supplies with their growing populations and economies. USAID works to address these challenges by helping cross border communities to cooperate with their neighbors while helping governments to better manage shared water resources. USAID's work empowers communities to apply integrated water resources management principles and tools among various water stakeholders. Our regional work on transboundary water resources management helps promote stability, economic prosperity, and healthy ecosystems in Central Asia.

## WHAT WE DO

### REGIONAL COOPERATION IN WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

USAID's introduction of integrated water resources management (IWRM) principles at the basin level and water-energy-food-environment (WEFE) nexus provide a model for cooperation, governance and climate change adaptation that demonstrate the benefits of shared water management to the broader watershed and among sectors of the economy and Central Asian countries. USAID also strengthens community involvement in managing water and contributes to the preparation of a new generation of water managers and technicians.

## ACTIVITIES

- **USAID’s Regional Water and Vulnerable Environment Activity (2020-25)** strengthens water cooperation across Central Asia for improved stability, economic prosperity, and healthy ecosystems. The Activity strengthens regional capacity to manage shared water resources and mitigate environmental risks in the Syr Darya and Amu Darya River basins. The Activity takes a multi-level governance approach to tackling complex regional water challenges by strengthening collaboration through stakeholder dialogues; developing a shared vision for integrated and sustainable river basin management using evidence and modeling; and fostering collaborative action across sectors and governance levels.
- **USAID’s Environmental Restoration of the Aral Sea Activity (2021-24)** provides environmental restoration measures to improve the resilience of landscapes in the Northern Aral Sea zone. The implementation of this Activity supports regional transboundary cooperation for water and environment and enhances resilience to climate change for vulnerable populations and ecosystems.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- USAID launched a WEFE nexus lecture series that delivers cutting-edge information on a range of WEFE nexus topics to enhance an understanding of the WEFE nexus approach and increase its implementation in the region. More than 100 water specialists, academia, and youth network members from Central Asia countries participated in the first three lectures in 2021.
- USAID organized two roundtables with academia in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to identify the best options for introducing the WEFE nexus approach into the educational system, retraining centers, and research institutes.
- USAID launched a decision-support process for the Syr Darya river basin with national consultation workshops held in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Consultations with national partners provided valuable input for the development of the integrated water energy model for the Syr Darya river basin.
- The governments of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan approved the Small Basin Councils (SBCs) of the Padshaata and Isfara rivers for targeted work to strengthen their capacity. The capacity building plan will be developed based on the SBC Organizational Capacity Assessment which will identify needs and opportunities to strengthen targeted SBCs. The plan aims to strengthen and promote the inclusive engagement of stakeholders in water resources management at the local level.
- Since 2020, USAID has brought together more than 300 representatives of government, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities to discuss interests and issues for regional water cooperation and provided many ideas for further action.
- USAID helped establish National Intersectoral Committees (NICs) which unite all sectoral ministries related to the WEFE nexus in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. NIC meetings enable members to identify and coordinate national interests and priorities for regional dialogue.
- USAID helped establish a Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) to foster regional dialogue and cooperation. The RCC is composed of NIC members and meets bi-annually with a focus on incorporating national interests into the regional agenda for effective and sustainable transboundary water resources management.