

# Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia

Making it relevant at all levels and across borders

## Context

Central Asia is characterised by a variety of ecosystems in its arid regions and high mountains. Due to high pressures on the limited natural resources, such as forests, pastures, biodiversity, soil, and water, these ecosystems are increasingly overused.

Climate change leads to a further reduction of all ecosystem services, increases the degradation of natural resources, and damages productive infrastructure (mudslides, landslides, damage to roads, buildings, and irrigation systems).

Over the past ten years, the countries of Central Asia have created some legal and strategic foundations for the sustainable use of land resources. They often have advanced national laws on environmental protection, land and land use, pasture and forest management, and the use of water resources. In addition, there are national strategies for biodiversity conservation and use, climate change, and for agricultural reform processes.

However, state administrations of the Central Asian countries are often lacking the capacity to implement reform processes in the land use sector and to apply the existing laws and strategies. Also, regional cooperation on land use issues, though critical, is in its infancy.

## Our objective

Integrative land use approaches are better embedded in all countries of Central Asia and on regional level.

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	Line ministries, governmental agencies
Duration	03.2021 - 02.2024

## Our measures

The regional programme on integrative and climate-sensitive land use (ILUCA) started in March 2021. It is the last in a series of projects on the sustainable use of land and natural resources in Central Asia since 2008, implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Government and the European Union.

The programme's multi-level approach proved successful in tackling forest and pasture degradation, conserving mountain ungulates and halting the loss of wildlife habitat. After ten years the progression from multi-level to more holistic and integrative approaches to land use management was an inevitable evolution for the countries in Central Asia. The programme team and experts supported partner institutions in activities ranged from direct community-level forestry and pasture management to policy development and mainstreaming on the national and regional levels.

Technical solutions on their own cannot solve the real challenge of sustainable land use management. Socio-economic, institutional, financial, cultural and environmental issues that differ across regions must also be considered. The harmful



L. to r.: Stakeholder meeting of the regional programme in Almaty, Kazakhstan – December 2019.

Harvest of fruit trees on rocky ground of piloting territory in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan – August 2018.

effects resulting from land use changes are the result of complex interactions between these different dimensions. The programme team and experts have developed a more holistic approach – the Integrative Land Use Management Approach (ILUMA) – which provides a conceptual framework and a set of knowledge management and dissemination tools to address all dimensions of land management.

ILUMA (see figure 01) describes eight dimensions, each of which must be considered to a variable degree when planning, designing, and implementing land use measures to ensure sustainability in the medium and long term.

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



Our team contributes to the revision, applicability and the implementation of existing policies, strategies and laws through strengthening respective sectoral and intersectoral working groups at national and regional levels. We do this through the provision of expertise and moderation and facilitation services on relevant specific topics and through targeted trainings and capacity development measures.

In Kazakhstan, we continue to support the Forestry and Wildlife Committee under the Ministry of Ecology, Geology, and Natural Resources. In Kyrgyzstan – the Forest Service under the Ministry of Agriculture. In Tajikistan – the Committee for Environmental Protection and the Agency for Forestry under the Government of Tajikistan. In Turkmenistan – the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection. In Uzbekistan – the State Committee on Forestry.

We also advise government partner organisations on monitoring and reporting on international development initiatives (e.g. Bonn Challenge, Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Initiative of the UNCCD and NDC).

With our support, the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) works on integrating sustainable land use issues into the dialogue with national partners within the framework of the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD), the key strategic instrument on environmental issues on regional level.

Our experts also provide ICSD with advice on the elaboration of development programmes (e.g. preparing project proposals). Together with other projects financed by the German government as part of its "Green Central Asia" initiative, we are co-organising events on the consequences of – and adaptation to – climate change in the region.



*L. to r.: Singing of Memorandum of Cooperation in the area of environmental protection with Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan – July 2021.*

*Workshop on climate modeling for employees of the Hydrometeorological service of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan – October 2019.*

*Pg 4: Local forest user on the training on grafting techniques in Surkhandarya region, Uzbekistan – July 2019.*

*Training on Climate Finance for sector experts and government partners in Dushanbe, Tajikistan – April 2021.*

**Key actors from governments, civil society, academia and the private sector use existing regional networks to exchange and learn about integrative land use management approaches.**

We further strengthen the Green Central Asia Expert Network, e.g. through training courses in association with the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative.



*The Economics of Land Degradation Initiative is a global initiative established in 2011 by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the German*

*Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the European Commission. It is supported by a broad network of partners across diverse fields of knowledge. ELD maintains a balanced perspective on parallel global concerns about the trajectory of anthropogenically induced trends and impact on land, which can be interlinked with endeavours to increase efficiency and outputs. Large-scale efforts that the ELD Initiative specifically endeavours to synergistically match its outputs with include the SDGs and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).*

The Expert Network conducts 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.

Furthermore, we are supporting integrative and climate-sensitive land use management measures in selected protected areas and watersheds, where stakeholders from Central Asian countries work together across borders.

## Our results to date

We supported the Bonn Challenge Initiative reporting process by facilitating a dialogue platform for our partners in each country. The Barometer Tool under the Bonn Challenge Initiative enables the monitoring of restoration commitments.

Transboundary cooperation is crucial for all countries of the region for preserving flora and fauna and here we continue working together with partners on the establishment of potential trans-border protected areas and their respective management.

### In Kazakhstan

In Akmola Province the subsidizing mechanism and procedures on pilot plots up to 50 hectares for private afforestation were successfully tested. Practical recommendations obtained from the results of previous piloting were taken into consideration, as well as the comparative table for the current and proposed legal norms.

### In Kyrgyzstan

The Forest Service has finalized the regulations for the collection and storage of forest tree seeds. This measure, together with a feasibility study on the storage of forest tree seeds, will enable the forestry sector to better address climate impacts. Additionally, the Forest Service has elaborated the Guidelines on Agroforestry. Participatory agroforestry on the State Forest Fund lands is one of the sustainable ways to reclaim unproductive lands, as this measure allows not only to increase the tree-covered areas but also to create sources of livelihood for local communities.

Moreover, frameworks to establish the functional zoning of State Forest Fund lands have been put in place. Appropriate zoning of forest use types is one of the key factors that will contribute to the integrated use of forest resources. Correct land use planning is all the more crucial given the growing anthropogenic pressure on forest resources in the country.



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## In Tajikistan

Government institutions have enhanced their knowledge of several international development initiatives. For instance, within the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) Readiness Programme, the national designated authorities have enhanced their understanding of GCF's coordination mechanisms and processes.

The Committee for Environmental Protection has developed the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification. Within the scope of this Plan, the intersectoral working group at the national level defined the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) baseline and set up the voluntary national targets, and the associated measures to achieve the LDN.

The State Environmental Programme and the Action Plan for Tajikistan for 2022 to 2027 have been elaborated by the Agency for Forestry. The Plan includes measures for environmental protection, sustainable and rational use of land and restoration of natural resources over the medium term.

## In Turkmenistan

The technical documentation to establish a new Protected Area (PA) was finalized and helps the state bodies in the implementation of the National Forestry Programme for 2019-2025. Thanks to this the area size of at least one existing PA will be increased. The capacity building of the staff on the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) and other modern nature conservancy tools help them to improve the overall management of one or two PAs of regional importance. The pistachio forest management to sustainably increase pistachio yields is being improved.

## In Uzbekistan

Strengthening staff capacity in protected areas, including national parks, has accelerated the creation of trans-border protected areas.

### An example from the field



Among the success stories is the example of **Mr. Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev**, who is the **Head of International Cooperation** in the Department of Exports

and Eco-tourism of the State Committee on Forestry. He has been working with the State Committee for the past 12 years and looks forward to further expanding the export potential. "Our cooperation with GIZ has proved successful," he said. "For example, we conducted a series of seminars on the sustainable pistachio forest management. To date, residents have leased pistachio forests only during the harvest period. Now, local entrepreneurs have started leasing forests for up to 49 years." Mr. Zakhadullaev emphasizes that with clear procedures put in place, the attitudes of population are evolving. As for the protected areas, a growing number of people are following official procedures. Over the past few years, the pistachio cultivation has become increasingly popular. "We are now planning the exchange of experiences on pistachio and forest management at a regional level in Central Asia," Mr. Zakhadullaev is enthusiastic.

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