If you're having trouble reading this message, click here

CAWEP

CENTRAL ASIA WATER & ENERGY PROGRAM

WORLD BANK GROUP

Co-funded by the European Union

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

UK International Development

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

CAWEP-4 Newsletter - 9th edition
April-June 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

- From Dialogue to Action: CACCC-2026 Charts a Path Toward Climate Resilience in Central Asia
- Uzbekistan Advances Digital Transformation of the Water Sector
- Dushanbe Meeting Advances Regional Cooperation on Water Resources in Central Asia
- CAWEP Supports the Dialogue on Transboundary Water Cooperation
- Regional Dialogue Supported by CAWEP Advances Coordinated Action on Drought Resilience
- Central Asia MediaLab Strengthens Climate Reporting Across the Region
- Water Without Borders: Central Asia's First Regional Water Cooperation Project Is Now a Reality

---

From Dialogue to Action: CACCC-2026 Charts a Path Toward Climate Resilience in Central Asia

High-level panel discussion at the Central Asia Climate Change Conference, held alongside the Regional Ecological Summit. Astana, Kazakhstan, April 22–24, 2026

On April 22–24, 2026, Astana, Kazakhstan, hosted the 2026 Central Asia Climate Change Conference (CACCC) sponsored by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) as part of the Resilient Landscapes in Central Asia (RESILAND CA+) Program of the World Bank. Organized in cooperation with CAWEP and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), this event became a platform for a substantive and results-oriented dialogue among stakeholders from across the region and beyond.

This year CACCC was held alongside the Regional Ecological Summit (RES) hosted by the government of Kazakhstan. The summit brought together senior government officials from across Central Asia, international organizations, financial institutions, and civil society, marking a new level of ambition in Central Asia's environmental diplomacy.

Presidents of all five Central Asian states attended the RES opening ceremony. The summit adopted the Astana Declaration on Ecological Solidarity in Central Asia and refocused attention on the ongoing reform of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS).

As Central Asia's climate agenda is becoming inseparable from its political and economic future, 58 sessions of RES and CACCC-2026 attracted around 10,000 participants.

CACCC-2026 addressed a wide range of topics—from updated climate commitments and the outcomes of the 30th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) in Brazil in November 2025 to methane, climate finance, renewable energy, water–energy cooperation, risk management, landscape restoration, and sustainable water use. These discussions contributed to the ongoing preparation of coordinated positions for COP31 that will take place later in 2026.

CACCC-26 highlighted two complementary trends: while Central Asian countries increasingly view climate agenda as part of their development and security strategies, most climate challenges require coordinated regional approaches, rather than national solutions.

Moreover, given that countries of the region face similar climate challenges, their cooperation supports the development of new approaches and tools, peer learning, and the scaling up of successful solutions.

Senior officials and development partners at the opening of CACCC-2026, which brought together around 10,000 participants across 58 sessions. Astana, Kazakhstan, April 2026

The conference demonstrated the region's readiness to move from discussions and declarations to specific implementation mechanisms—including roadmaps, memoranda, investment projects and engagement with international financial institutions. At the closing session participants summarized the conference outcomes and outlined next steps for developing a consolidated position of Central Asian countries ahead of the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties.

"Over these three days, we once again saw that for Central Asia climate change is no longer a matter of distant projections—it is a factor directly affecting water, energy, agriculture and infrastructure, public health, and the overall resilience of our development models. For our region, the climate agenda can no longer be confined to environmental policies. It has become a matter of economic resilience, regional security and quality of public planning," said **Yerlan Nysanbayev**, Kazakhstan's Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, in his closing remarks.

CACCC-2026 reinforced the understanding that the region requires more coordinated approaches to water, adaptation, energy, disaster risk management, and resilient infrastructure.

The final resolution of CACCC-2026 captured the key political, institutional, and investment outcomes of the conference that advanced regional coordination, mobilization of climate finance, and the advancement of joint initiatives for sustainable development.

Uzbekistan Advances Digital Transformation of the Water Sector

Digital tools — remote sensing, automated monitoring and GIS — are reshaping how Uzbekistan manages irrigation and water distribution

On May 14, 2026, CAWEP organized a national roundtable on the *Digitalization and Automation of the Water Sector in Uzbekistan* for government agencies, development partners, private sector representatives, and water experts.

The stakeholders discussed the findings of the national assessment on digitalization in Uzbekistan's water sector prepared under the *CAWEP Digitalization of the Water Sector in Central Asia Activity* and reviewed implemented digital activities, identifying priorities for accelerating the country's digital transformation. The assessment examined national policies, existing information systems, institutional capacities, financing mechanisms, and lessons learned from automation initiatives across the sector.

Officials from the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Digital Technologies, research institutions, international organizations, and private technology companies shared experiences and showcased local digital solutions, including remote sensing, automated monitoring systems, geographic information systems (GIS), artificial intelligence, and data analytics.

As part of the Water Sector Development Concept 2020–2030, Uzbekistan is integrating water information systems through a Unified Digital Water Resources Management Platform and a Situation Center under the Ministry of Water Resources. The roundtable highlighted further opportunities to strengthen coordination among information systems and expand the use of innovative technologies to improve water resource management and service delivery.

Feedback from participants will help finalize the national assessment report and inform a results-oriented action plan outlining priority investments, implementation timelines, and institutional responsibilities.

The event marked an important step toward strengthening data-driven water management in Uzbekistan and fostering collaboration among government agencies, development partners, academia, and the private sector to support sustainable and resilient water resources management.

Dushanbe Meeting Advances Regional Cooperation on Water Resources in Central Asia

Delegations of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, EC-IFAS and the World Bank at the Fourth Consultative Meeting on the CAWEC project. Dushanbe, Tajikistan, April 29–30, 2026

On April 29–30, 2026, officials from of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS), and the World Bank convened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, for the Fourth Consultative Meeting to advance the preparation of the Central Asia Water Efficiency Cooperation Grant Project (CAWEC).

Opening the meeting, the officials of EC-IFAS and the World Bank emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in improving water management and resilience across Central Asia. With the facilitation of CAWEP, water management and foreign affairs officials from across the region worked on finalizing project design and the first-year implementation plan for CAWEC, strengthening project governance arrangements and ensuring alignment on implementation requirements and result indicators.

CAWEC is a regional project of the Central Asia Water Efficiency and Conservation Program, approved by the World Bank Board in May 2025 and structured under a Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA). The program aims to support countries in addressing water efficiency challenges while fostering regional cooperation and knowledge exchange.

As the regional component was designed to tackle issues that extend beyond national borders and require coordinated action, activities financed under this component involve at least two countries and must be jointly agreed by participating countries, ensuring a truly regional approach.

The Fourth Consultative Meeting reaffirmed the commitment of Central Asian countries to work together on addressing shared water challenges. By advancing preparations for CAWEC implementation, the meeting laid the foundation for stronger regional collaboration, enhanced knowledge exchange, and more efficient and sustainable management of water resources across the region.

By facilitating these consultations, CAWEP helped participating countries to develop practical mechanisms for cooperation, knowledge exchange, and coordinated action to improve water-use efficiency and address common water management challenges that transcend national borders.

Read more on CAWEC in *Water Without Borders: Central Asia's First Regional Water Cooperation Project Is Now a Reality* below.

CAWEP Supports the Dialogue on Transboundary Water Cooperation

Ministers and deputy ministers responsible for water resources, alongside senior officials of the EU, the World Bank,

SDC and the UN, at the "Frontiers of Transboundary Cooperation" forum. Dushanbe, Tajikistan, May 25, 2026

As glacial retreat, growing drought risks, and interconnected river systems are driving demand for more transparent, science-based cooperation, Central Asia is increasingly seen as a region where innovative approaches to water management are emerging. Digital platforms, climate analytics, and shared monitoring systems are helping countries move toward more coordinated water governance.

On May 25, 2026, the pre-conference forum “Frontiers of Transboundary Cooperation: Tools and Actions for Sustainable Water Management” convened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The event was organized by CAWEP in partnership with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Bringing together more than 100 high-level officials, experts, and development partners to advance practical solutions for shared water challenges in Central Asia, the forum was part of the 4th International High-Level Conference “Water for Sustainable Development” of the International Decade for Action 2018–2028 hosted by the government of Tajikistan.

The event was attended by ministers and deputy ministers responsible for water resource management from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, alongside senior officials of the European Union, the World Bank, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the United Nations. Scientists, river basin specialists, and policy experts also joined discussions focused on strengthening basin-level cooperation and improving the management of transboundary water resources.

More than 100 officials, experts and development partners discussed practical solutions for shared water challenges, including field evidence from the Chu–Talas basin. Dushanbe, Tajikistan, May 25, 2026

The Forum served as a high-level platform for dialogue on transboundary water cooperation and highlighted regional and global practices supporting climate resilience and driven by data, research, and digital tools. Participants discussed how to strengthen evidence-based decision-making capacity of governments and river basin organizations, while promoting trust and coordination among riparian states. Discussions centered on how structured exchange of good practices can improve basin-wide planning, enhance cooperation mechanisms, and better connect the region with global water

governance processes, including the UN Water Conferences and World Water Forums.

In a statement presented at the Water for Sustainable Development Conference, the forum participants highlighted new practices emerging in Central Asia and their role in strengthening water security, climate resilience, and regional stability. The forum also marked a milestone in the preparations for the 2026 UN Water Conference in Abu Dhabi. Policy and technical synthesis notes developed by the forum will feed into global discussions on water security, climate adaptation, and international cooperation towards Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Regional Dialogue Supported by CAWEP Advances Coordinated Action on Drought Resilience

Regional and national experts translate drought risk assessment results into shared priorities and an action plan at the Regional Drought Dialogue. Dushanbe, Tajikistan, May 29, 2026

On May 29, 2026, CAWEP, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and regional partners, convened the Regional Drought Dialogue in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. This regional event dedicated to *Translating Drought Risk and Resilience Assessment Results into Regional Priorities and an Action Plan* concluded a series of national drought exchanges held in all Central Asian countries to identify national priorities and next steps.

Organized back-to-back with the Dushanbe Water Conference and building on its momentum, the Regional Drought Dialogue brought together a diverse group of stakeholders. Participants included officials from regional organizations, basin and interstate structures, development partners, research institutions, and technical experts working on climate resilience, water resources, agriculture, and risk

management.

The dialogue focused on strengthening a coordinated regional approach to drought risk management and highlighted cross-border challenges that require joint responses and enhanced institutional cooperation across countries and sectors.

Participants discussed the regional drought profile, including key trends, risk drivers, and potential areas for regional cooperation, and reviewed results of a long-term environmental impact assessment of drought based on data collected across Central Asia.

The dialogue reinforced the foundation for continued collaboration among regional organizations and international partners engaged in drought resilience efforts in Central Asia.

By translating technical drought risk and resilience assessments into actionable regional priorities, the dialogue supported a more coordinated and evidence-based approach to drought management in Central Asia. These outcomes contribute to ongoing efforts under CAWEP and the Central Asia Rapid Drought Risk and Resilience Assessment (DRRA) project to strengthen regional cooperation, improve preparedness, and enhance resilience to increasing climate variability.

Central Asia MediaLab Strengthens Climate Reporting Across the Region

Twenty-six journalists, content creators and communications professionals from all five Central Asian countries completed the fourth Central Asia MediaLab course, bringing the network to over 100 trained media professionals

CAWEP-supported Central Asia MediaLab has crossed a major milestone, bringing its network of

trained regional media professionals to over 100. Ahead of the 2026 Central Asia Climate Change Conference (CACCC) and the Regional Environmental Summit (RES), CAWEP trained 26 journalists, content creators, and communications professionals from all five Central Asian countries. This fourth iteration of the media training course since 2023 focused on climate reporting and raising awareness of climate challenges. Designed as a hands-on media laboratory, the course equipped participants with the knowledge, tools, expert networks, and mentoring needed to transform complex climate issues into engaging stories for diverse audiences. The program included online learning, webinars, an in-person workshop, field reporting during CACCC and RES activities, and one-on-one mentoring.

Topics explored by participants ranged from water management, energy transition, climate adaptation, air pollution, and land degradation to climate finance and the One Health approach, which highlights the connections between human, animal, and environmental health. The MediaLab introduced trainees to innovative AI-powered tools, including a customized knowledge hub and a virtual assistant that helped participants research, structure, and refine their stories.

The initiative produced an impressive media footprint. Participants released around 220 stories and multimedia products across digital platforms, television, and social media. Their online output generated more than 800,000 views, while television broadcasts potentially reached an estimated audience of over 30 million viewers across the region.

MediaLab impact extends beyond the media output: it has helped build a community of climate storytellers and equipped them to report on regional challenges with accuracy, depth, and local relevance. By investing in media capacity and knowledge sharing, CAWEP is helping ensure that climate, water, and energy issues inform public dialogue and support climate resilience across Central Asia.

Water Without Borders: Central Asia's First Regional Water Cooperation Project Is Now a Reality

Irrigation canal in Central Asia. AI-generated illustration

Central Asia's shared rivers and irrigation systems have long called for a collective response to water challenges, yet, until recently, the complexity of cross-border cooperation kept this vision out of reach. On June 30, 2026, that changed.

The World Bank Board of Directors approved a US$20 million International Development Association (IDA) grant to support the Central Asia Water Efficiency Cooperation Project (CAWEC)—the first truly regional water project in Central Asia. To be implemented by the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS), CAWEC is a result of years of patient, determined work by teams across the region and within the World Bank. The project will support transboundary activities across Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It will help attract additional investment in water management and conservation in Central Asian countries and strengthen their collective capacity to manage shared water resources.

Behind every landmark project is the groundwork that made it possible—and in this case, that groundwork was laid by CAWEP. As the only multi-donor program in Central Asia dedicated to improving water and energy security at both national and regional levels, since 2009 CAWEP has been building the technical knowledge, institutional relationships, and policy foundations that a project like CAWEC requires.

When the time was ripe for developing CAWEC, CAWEP also played a decisive role in bringing this process to a successful conclusion. The team supported country dialogue through a series of working group meetings (see *Dushanbe Meeting Advances Regional Cooperation on Water Resources in Central Asia* above) to prepare project documentation and develop initial implementation packages and work plan in record time—a feat that would have been impossible without the analytical work, stakeholder engagement, and trust that CAWEP had built over the years.

The story of CAWEC is only beginning to unfold. The Financing Agreement is expected to be signed in summer 2026, with first activities launching in the fall. CAWEP will continue to support IFAS throughout the project lifecycle.

This quarterly newsletter follows the progress of CAWEP-4 and highlights some of the inspiring results achieved by our teams that promote regional cooperation for more resilient and better integrated water and energy management under a changing climate.

Subscribe • Unsubscribe from this list

CAWEP funds initiatives that improve water and energy management under a changing climate, strengthen national and regional institutions, and facilitate regional dialogue on water and energy security.

This newsletter was produced by financial support of the European Union, Switzerland and UK. Its content is the sole responsibility of the World Bank and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of CAWEP donors.

For more information visit our website.

Copyright © 2026 The World Bank Group. All rights reserved.