



## CAWEP-4 Newsletter - 5th edition - April-June 2025

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## CAWEP Steering Committee Meeting in Vienna: A Milestone in Water-Energy Dialogue and Donor Collaboration



CAWEP Steering Committee members discuss water and energy cooperation in Vienna

The Central Asia Water-Energy Program (CAWEP) is dedicated to keeping its donors informed and engaged, ensuring timely feedback and recommendations for future activities. In line with this commitment, CAWEP held another Steering Committee meeting on May 7th in Vienna. The meeting brought together program counterparts, including representatives from the European Union and the governments of Switzerland and the United Kingdom, who co-fund CAWEP's fourth phase.

Regular meetings are crucial for maintaining transparency and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. They provide a platform for discussing the program's progress and mapping out its future direction and next steps to enhance water-energy dialogue in Central Asia. During the meeting, participants reviewed key achievements in energy, water, and climate activities supported by CAWEP and proposed adjustments to the 2025 work plan to maximize the program's impact.

Donors expressed their appreciation for CAWEP's work and reaffirmed their commitment to providing both political and financial support for continued implementation. This endorsement highlights the quality and impact of CAWEP's efforts to promote regional cooperation in critical sectors such as water, energy, and climate change.

## Central Asia Unites to Tackle Climate Change: A Landmark Conference in Ashgabat





Speaker addresses delegates at the climate conference in Ashgabat

On May 13 and 14, 2025, the vibrant city of Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, became a hub of innovation and collaboration as it hosted the Central Asia Climate Change Conference (CACCC-2025). Organized by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) and supported by CAWEP and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the conference brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials, environmental experts, and representatives from international organizations. Their mission: to forge strategies that will mitigate the impacts of climate change across Central Asia.

The conference was more than a meeting of minds; it was a testament to the region's commitment to fostering cooperation and dialogue on pressing climate issues. With the backing of CAWEP and the World Bank, CACCC-2025 provided a dynamic platform for exchanging knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions. Such discussions are crucial to building resilience against climate-related hazards that threaten the region's future.

Participants delved into a wide array of topics, from climate finance mechanisms and regional cooperation to preparations for COP 30. The conference featured engaging plenary sessions, thematic panels, and parallel discussions that explored sustainable solutions in the agriculture, energy, and water sectors. Attendees reviewed progress on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0), transparency frameworks, and regional strategies for climate change adaptation.

One of the conference's standout moments was the presentation of a draft final document, outlining bold recommendations to strengthen regional cooperation, scale up climate finance, and enhance institutional capacity. CACCC-2025 confirmed the readiness of Central Asian countries to respond jointly to climate challenges, showcasing a high level of coordination among government bodies, the scientific community, and international partners.

The commitment to addressing climate change, collaborative spirit and innovative ideas shared at CACCC-2025, pave the way towards a sustainable and resilient future for Central Asia.

## CACCC-2025 Panel Discusses Water-Energy Nexus Solutions for Central Asia



Panelists present water-energy nexus solutions at CACCC-2025 in Ashgabat

On May 14, 2025, CAWEP hosted a stimulating session titled "Water and Energy Nexus in Central Asia under a Changing Climate" at CACCC-2025. This gathering focused on developing practical frameworks for regional cooperation and moving from dialogue to operational decision-making in water-energy management in Central Asia, especially in the face of climate change.

The session was structured as an interactive symposium, fostering meaningful dialogue and a pursuit of practical solutions. Dmitry Petrin, World Bank Senior Operations Officer, opened the session by highlighting CAWEP's evolution into its fourth phase (2024–2028), noting that since 2009, the program has supported 24 projects worth approximately \$3.7 billion and setting the stage for a series of compelling discussions.

Serik Bekmaganbetov from the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) talked about institutional frameworks for regional decision-making. He outlined ongoing efforts to modernize IFAS's organizational structure and integrate hydroenergy considerations, noting that over 90% of electricity in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is generated by hydropower, making the water-energy nexus particularly critical for regional energy security. Takayoshi Kato from OECD followed up



with a discussion of multidimensional benefits of water-energy cooperation. He outlined key opportunity areas: joint strategic planning, enhanced data sharing for coordinated decision-making, institutional coordination mechanisms, and joint investment promotion.

Sylvie Goet from OSCE HQ captivated the audience by advocating for the engagement of youth and women in regional collaboration through the water-energy-food nexus for a sustainable future, opening the floor for engaging open discussions on regional data sharing and cooperative management, resulting in recommendations for improved nexus management.

The session featured cutting-edge technical presentations on water-energy systems modeling. Dinara Ziganshina from the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (SIC ICWC) presented results from the WEAP (Water Evaluation and Planning) modeling project, which has developed sophisticated scenarios for water-energy system analysis across the Aral Sea basin. Her presentation outlined key scenarios, as well as climate change scenarios that help assess future water-energy trade-offs. Federico Querio from the World Bank discussed the results of water-energy systems modelling, focusing on the decarbonization pathways and hydro vs gas energy trade-offs.

Wulf-Hendrik Goretzky from GIZ's TRIGGER Project discussed the practical application of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus approach in Tajikistan's Zarafshan River Basin, showcasing concrete examples of how nexus thinking can be operationalized through integrated river basin management, farmer training programs, and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

In their final comments, all presenters and commentators emphasized the critical importance of advancing comprehensive, integrated approaches to water-energy nexus management in Central Asia—reflecting CAWEP's strategic evolution from sector-specific interventions to holistic resource planning. The discussions underscored the importance of transboundary collaboration and innovation in addressing climate challenges and paving the way for sustainable development in the region.

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## **CAWEP's Media Training Boosts Climate Awareness in Central Asia**



From May 5 to 12, 2025 CAWEP held its third annual media training. As in the previous two years, the training was organized in conjunction with CACCC-2025 and targeted the creation of high-quality climate-related content by journalists from Central Asia. The program featured a blend of webinars, in-person sessions in Almaty and Ashgabat, mentoring and support, and active participation in CACCC-2025. Fifteen journalists—nine women and six men—applied their newly acquired knowledge to reporting on CACCC-2025 and preparing other materials related to climate change in Central Asia during and after the conference publishing at least 40 materials in different news channels.

This year's media training was delivered to representatives of state media outlets selected by their respective governments. Many of the participants had limited or no prior experience reporting on climate issues. "Participation in the conference motivated me to deeper explore the issue of climate change and made me realize its importance," said Mukhyo Murtazoyeva, a journalist from Uzbekistan's Sevimli TV channel.

A separate session for alumni from previous years ensured continuity of their professional development and demonstrated the lasting impact of the training on professional practices. "After last year's media training, I published several materials during the Climate Conference in Almaty, which helped me win a trip to participate in COP 29 in Baku," shared Anastasiya Bengard from the Kyrgyz Republic's 24 kg news agency. Other alumni also reported meaningful outcomes, especially highlighting that connections they formed at CACCC-2024 helped them publish more climate-related materials in their countries. New publications, in turn, earned them recognition, as well as grants from international organizations to further explore topics related to the environment, climate, water, and energy.



Speakers share insights during CAWEP's media training session on climate reporting in Central Asia

This year's training also delivered tangible results, both in terms of measurable media output and personal growth reported by participants.

The aired and published materials of journalists had a potential reach of over 20 million people through TV channels across Central Asia, 100 000 through print outlets, and 220 317 through social media. Most of the materials appeared in national media, such as the ELTR TV channel in the Kyrgyz Republic, SEVIMLI TV channel in Uzbekistan, Khabar in Kazakhstan, *Yegemen Kazakhstan*, and *Neitralny Turkmenistan* newspapers, and Baigenews and Khovar news agency websites in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, respectively.

A post-training questionnaire revealed that journalists in several editorial offices, including state media, had begun proposing climate-related story ideas, signaling a growing foundation for a long-term transformation of the regional climate narrative.

The media training in conjunction with the CACCC-2025 created a dynamic ecosystem—a space where participants actively created rather than passively consumed information, transitioning from "I listened" to "I experimented, understood, and created." "I thought that since I am not an eco-journalist, I couldn't publish materials related to the environment, but after this media training and climate conference, I realized that I want to and I can!" said Mavzun Khodzhimatova, Deputy Editor of *Ilm va Khayot* popular science magazine in Tajikistan.

## Youth and Women Encouraged to Join Climate Action





Young participants engage in discussions and presentations on climate action in Ashgabat

On May 12, 2025, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat hosted a seminar dedicated to empowering youth and women in addressing climate change risks in Turkmenistan and Central Asia. This seminar was part of CACCC-2025 and was organized in collaboration with CAWEP, the World Bank, and CAREC.

The event brought together 30 participants, including students from universities such as the International University for Humanities and Development, the Yagshygeldy Kakayev International Oil and Gas University, and the Oguzkhan University of Engineering and Technology. Young activists from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan also joined the discussions, bringing diverse perspectives and infusing the seminar with their enthusiasm. Led by experts from Turkmenistan, the seminar offered valuable insights into both international and national climate agendas, environmental youth movements, and strategies for effectively engaging youth and women in climate initiatives. Education and awareness were highlighted as essential tools for combating climate change, underscoring the significance of informed and active participation.

Dmitry Petrin, representing CAWEP, outlined the program's objectives, which focus on ensuring water and energy security in the face of a changing climate in the region. Then, the Regional Climate Civil Society Network of Central Asian countries and Regional Youth Conferences for Central Asia and Afghanistan presented their activities, highlighting regional cooperation among environmental activists and the involvement of youth in climate action.

Participants engaged in practical group work, crafting action plans to mitigate climate risks while considering national policies and prioritizing the involvement of youth and women. These outcomes were presented by an Selva Nuriyeva, SDG Ambassador from Turkmenistan at the CACCC-2025 parallel session on Climate Actions of Civil Society and Youth in Central Asia on May 13, 2025.

Abulkhan Alimkhan, a young activist from Kazakhstan, shared his experience of CACCC-2025: "At the climate conference, I made contact with experts who agreed to address the National Youth Conference of Kazakhstan that we are organizing." The active participation of youth in the parallel session at the conference demonstrated their keen interest in future climate action. Many of them are already engaged with various NGOs and environmental activities, and they are eager to expand their efforts.



“CACCC-2025 helped us establish strong regional connections,” said Begim Zhanuzakova, from the Kyrgyz Republic. “By sharing experiences and engaging in joint analytical work, we are laying the foundation for sustainable cooperation within the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Such meetings open doors to new partnerships and inspire us to keep advancing the regional climate agenda together.” Active engagement of youth and women in regional climate initiatives aligns with CAWEP priorities of promoting water and energy security in Central Asia under a changing climate.

## Energy Ministers of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan Meet in Dubai to Advance Kambarata-1 Hydropower Project



Energy ministers discuss regional cooperation on the Kambarata-1 project in Dubai

From May 26 to 27, 2025, energy ministers from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan met in Dubai for the Second Ministerial Roundtable on the Kambarata-1 Hydropower Plant (HPP), a major regional project that will boost energy security and improve water use in Central Asia.

Supported by CAWEP, the event brought together top energy officials and representatives from the ministries of finance and water resources, along with senior World Bank staff. Discussions focused on next steps for the jointly implemented 1,860 MW HPP on the Naryn River, including updates on feasibility, environmental and social assessments, cost estimates, financing, and grid infrastructure needs.

Tatiana Proskuryakova, World Bank Director for Central Asia, commended the growing regional cooperation and reaffirmed the World Bank's support for the project.

All three ministers expressed their strong political backing for the project and highlighted its importance for sustainable energy and water management in the region. They confirmed commitment to ongoing collaboration and regular high-level dialogue. The meeting concluded with an agreement on the next steps in advancing the Kambarata-1 HPP. CAWEP's support for the Kambarata-1 HPP project aligns with its priorities of fostering regional cooperation and sustainable development. The Kambarata-1 Hydropower Project is a transformational clean energy initiative aimed at enhancing energy security, improving the use of water resources, strengthening regional cooperation, and accelerating the transition to clean energy in the Kyrgyz Republic and Central Asia.

## **IFAS Reform Meeting in Dushanbe Opens the Door to a More Sustainable Water and Energy Future for Central Asia**



Delegates discuss IFAS reform and regional sustainability at the meeting in Dushanbe

Recognizing the significant potential of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) for promoting and facilitating a sustainable use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, CAWEP has committed to support IFAS in its reform efforts.

On June 2–3, 2025, the IFAS Reform Working Group, backed by CAWEP, gathered in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Delegations from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan participated in person, while representatives of Turkmenistan joined the discussions online. Participants from the Ministries of Water Resources, Foreign Affairs, Economy/Finance, and Environment reviewed the progress in the approval of changes proposed in December 2024 by each country. They explored the



roles of four key commissions within the new organization, setting the stage for the next phase of the reform process.

The working group reached a broad agreement to continue the dialogue on the reform process and agreed on a clear action plan for the next phase of the reform weaving together the diverse perspectives of the region's stakeholders.

## Regional Forum in Dushanbe Tackles Water, Energy, and Climate Challenges



Participants of the Regional Forum in Dushanbe gather for a group photo

Central Asia has experienced significant warming, with average annual temperatures rising faster than the global average. Snow- and glacier-fed river basins are at the heart of Central Asia's water, energy, food, and ecosystem security, and their sustainable management and protection across all forms of water storage—glaciers, reservoirs, and groundwater—require transboundary cooperation, coordinated planning and due diligence in implementing policy decisions to promote regional stability and development and to reduce risks.

On May 29, 2025, a high-level regional forum on enhancing transboundary cooperation for water sustainability and climate resilience in glacier-dependent basins of Central Asia convened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, bringing together water ministers, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers to address critical challenges of water sustainability and climate resilience in the region. The event was organized by a consortium of international and regional bodies including the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), OECD,

International Water Measurement Institute (IWMI), the World Bank, CAWEP, GIZ, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA).

The forum facilitated high-level dialogue on water, energy, food, and environmental security in the context of climate change, highlighting regional and international efforts in transboundary water governance and the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach, promoting the application of science-based tools and data for climate adaptation. The forum also explored investment opportunities and innovative financing mechanisms, including nature-based solutions, and ways of strengthening decision making under increasing uncertainty.

Participants shared their understanding of climate resilience priorities, reinforced partnerships, exchanged knowledge on integrated basin management, and developed concise recommendations for future cooperation and investments. This event was well aligned with the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (2025) and the beginning of the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034), and directly supported several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships).

CAWEP's support to this forum is part of its broader strategy to promote regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable development and facilitate high-level dialogue on water and energy security. CAWEP works closely with various organizations to strengthen institutional capacity and promote dialogue across sectors, ensuring that the planning and management of water and energy resources are integrated. The integrated approach is crucial for achieving green, resilient, and inclusive development of the whole of Central Asia, where competition over water and energy resources can be a potent source of conflict, but also has immense potential to catalyze cooperation and development.

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## **Proactive Planning for Central Asia's Future: Insights from the Regional Foresight Exercise**





Participants of the Regional Foresight Exercise in Central Asia during the group photo

On May 27 and 28, the Agency for Strategic Reforms under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Delegation of the European Union to Uzbekistan, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) and CAWEP organized the first Regional Foresight Exercise: Central Asia 2050. Over 40 representatives of strategic and research institutions, scientists and experts from the five countries of Central Asia participated in the event. As the first such event on a truly regional scale, the exercise drove conversations about the region's future through 2050, identifying key trends, challenges, and opportunities to guide strategic planning and policy making. It advanced regional forecasting and policy dialogue, helping stakeholders anticipate uncertainties and address potential issues proactively.

The *Central Asia @2050: Foresight Brief: Water, Energy, Climate Change, Transport and Demographics* prepared by the World Bank team featured prominently in discussions at the event. This brief examines interrelated and strategically important issues—such as climate change, water resources, and energy—and considers their broad implications for other vitally important sectors, including transport and connectivity, and social dynamics. Each section summarizes current evidence, identifies key knowledge gaps, and highlights strategic questions for policy makers. In doing so, the brief establishes an evidence-based framework that supports proactive and integrated planning in pursuit of regional objectives.

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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.

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CAWEP funds initiatives that improve water and energy management under a changing climate, strengthen national and regional

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